



Council can't commit to brownfield policy before review

MAYOR BACKS GREEN BELT PLEA

Report by Jamie Brassington

WEST Midlands Mayor Andy Street is calling on Dudley Council to rule out building on green belt land around Halesowen.

Campaigners fear the rural fringe will make way for development needed for the Black Country's soaring population.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley said he could not promise open land in the area would not be built on, as the council launches a review. The region needs thousands of new homes and facilities.

During the election campaign Conservative Mr Street said he favoured protecting green belt where possible and brownfield sites should be redeveloped instead.

Around 22,000 homes and 300 hectares for industry are needed in the Black Country by 2036, according to the Black Country Core Strategy.

Campaign group Halesowen Abbey Trust fears countryside to the south of Halesowen – areas such as Lapal, Hayley Green and Lutley – will be used for around 6,000 homes and 75 hectares of industrial development. The trust has been supported by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris.

In a letter to Councillor Harley, leader of the Conservative-led council, Mr Street said: "I recognise well the very considerable pressure all West Midlands local authorities are under to meet future housing needs. We are both committed to the policy of 'brownfield' first."

"I support the views of the Halesowen Abbey Trust that the land they refer to is of particular importance, providing a valuable local amenity as well as beautiful green space. I very much hope that Dudley Council will be able to agree that no 'exceptional circumstance' condition will be met, and that the land can continue to enjoy the protection it warrants."

Dudley Council is launching a review of the green belt next month. Asked if the council could 'agree' it will not be built on, Councillor Harley said: "Not at the moment, we haven't finished the review. It has to go through the due process."

ALL ABOARD AS POLAR EXPRESS COMES TO RESCUE



Youngsters from the Black Country celebrate after Telford Steam Railway offered them a free ride on the Polar Express

A STEAM railway has come to the rescue of a group of Black Country youngsters who had been let down.

Telford Steam Railway stepped in when a group of around 80 children and parents were let down earlier this month after it emerged a third-party failed to book tickets for the Shropshire attraction's popular The Polar Express train.

Generous trustees at the not-for-profit railway stepped in to offer a free trip to the group from the Dudley and Sandwell area after hearing of their plight.

Kelly Armstrong, from Cradley Heath, and

her children Rhiannon, 15, Fletcher, nine, and Erin, eight, were some of those to enjoy the trip on The Polar Express.

She said: "The railway was kind enough to put a trip on for free for us and we had an absolutely amazing day. It was just magical."

"In the end there was a big group of us from Quarry Bank Primary School and everyone had so much fun."

"It was all thanks to the volunteers who worked really hard to put the trip on for us and we're all so grateful."

Phil Neal, spokesman for the steam railway, said: "When we heard about it we

thought we would do what we could to get these people on the train."

"Tickets for almost 80 people costs a lot of money. We are volunteers at the railway and have families too. We do it because we enjoy it and we like to see others enjoy it here too."

The original trip was being organised by Gemma Lapping, of Gemma's Trips, who apologised and said all families have now been reimbursed. But Mrs Armstrong, who handed over £200, claimed there were still a number of families waiting for a refund.

A West Midlands Police spokesman confirmed that a complaint has been made.

FATAL

Arrest after man is found dying in road

A MOTORIST has been arrested in connection with the death of a man found injured in a Stourbridge street.

The victim, aged 37, was found with multiple injuries in Amblecote High Street in the early hours of Saturday.

It is thought the crash happened around two hours before emergency services arrived at 5.25am.

A 20-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving after handing himself into a local police station. Police say he has been released pending investigation.

Sergeant Alan Wood, from West Midlands Police, said: "A number of people have spoken to me and my team but I am appealing to anyone who has not yet come forward and who was in the area at around 3.30am, around the time of the collision, to contact me."

Anyone with information can contact the Collision Investigation Unit by emailing fl_collision_invest@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

COLLISION

Couple among six killed in horror crash

A COUPLE going home in a taxi after an evening with friends were among the six victims of a horrific crash in Birmingham city centre.

Mother Lucy Davis, aged 43, of Kingstanding, a British Sign Language interpreter, is believed to have died instantly in the collision on Lee Bank Middleway at 1.10am on Sunday. Her boyfriend Lee Jenkins, 42, died later in hospital. Taxi driver father-of-six Imtiaz Mohammed, 33, died at the scene.

Three men who died in an Audi S3 involved in the accident were Kasar Jehangir, 25, Tauseer Hussain, 26, and Mohammed Fasha, 30. A 22-year-old passenger from the Audi is in hospital with serious injuries.

Drug dealer Jehangir was reportedly released from prison this year after being jailed in November 2016 after his involvement in a 130mph motorway chase.



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Centre tells customers about campaign



Steve Edis, Roy Lees and Dave Sims at Walsall Training Centre with donations

STAFF have been digging deep to help our Feed a Family This Christmas campaign.

Walsall Training Centre, which provides courses and assessments for gas, plumbing, electrical or construction trade sectors is the latest business to back the appeal.

They have collected dozens of items of food as well toiletries, clothing and toys, which will go to help those in need during the festive period.

Steve Edis, director of the training centre, said he was delighted to support the campaign.

"We try to support local food banks at this time of year, as we know there are a lot of families struggling at Christmas," he said.

Readers have donated festive food such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings, as well as basics including canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice. Non-food

items such as toiletries, baby supplies, new socks and small presents have also come flooding in.

Since the campaign launched on November 4, we've had support from an array of organisations and schools across the region.

PTP Training has backed the appeal along with Healthwatch Wolverhampton, while Saddlers Shopping Centre in Walsall has come on board to collect donations.

180 people are steered into driving jobs by firm

ALMOST 200 people have found driving jobs across the West Midlands, thanks to the growth of a recruitment provider, with hundreds more drivers to be placed into work in the next 12 months.

Dudley-based Workforce Staffing established its driving division a year ago and has found jobs for more than 180 people, working with more than 120 of the region's businesses.

The division, which employs seven staff at its branches in New Mill Street, Dudley, Birmingham and Redditch, has found jobs for workers in the Black Country, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

Joe Alekna, managing director of Workforce Staffing, said: "This has been an outstanding first year for our driving division and it is great that we have been able to place so many local people into local jobs."

Focus

"This is really only the beginning. We intend to double our current staff count over the next year and get 350 drivers out working across the region."

"Our focus is on connecting the right people with opportunities and our network of branches across the Midlands makes us ideally placed to fill vacancies - especially with the country's haulage industry facing a shortage of 45,000 drivers."

In 2015 the Workforce Group was voted as one of the UK's top 100 businesses to work for in the Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies survey. It specialises in supplying staff for sectors including logistics, transport, professional services, office, food manufacturing and manufacturing.

Faster broadband speeds are coming

HOMES across Dudley borough are set to benefit from faster internet access as the Black Country's superfast broadband infrastructure is extended.

The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and the four Black Country local authorities are working together to extend superfast broadband infrastructure across the Black Country.

The initiative is part of a Government project aiming to extend the availability of high-speed fibre broadband to 98 per cent of homes and businesses in Dudley in less than three years. Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "This initiative is long overdue."

To find out more visit www.black-countrylep.co.uk/regional-growth/black-country-broadband-website.

Your generosity sees donations flooding in

YOUR incredible generosity in donating food to our Feed A Family This Christmas appeal will have a tangible effect for those in need across the Black Country.

Once again, thousands of items have flooded in to ensure people who, for whatever reason, rely on a food bank for a meal at Christmas time will not go without.

Our drop off points have been kept very busy during the four-week campaign thanks to the amazing kindness of you, our readers, and the wider community.

To highlight just how important food banks and keeping them stocked up can be, the Express & Star visited The Good Shepherd Ministry at Darlington Street Methodist Church in Wolverhampton to speak with people who have been given a lifeline by the volunteers who put themselves out to ensure others don't go without.

Helen Holloway, admin manager at the Good Shepherd, said: "The problem isn't going away and unfortunately food banks are more vital than ever."

The Good Shepherd Ministry also offers those who show the most enthusiasm for taking any opportunity they can get a place on their Service Volunteer Programme.

One such person who has taken on this responsibility is Heriberto Garcia Vazquez, 52, who travels via bus from Birmingham every day to help out. He started out as a food bank service user but is now a major part of the operation. He said: "These guys are like my family and I love it, I don't mind what they need me to do I will do it."

Maxine Price and Stephen Dale, who are engaged and live in Merridale, were both given a meal by volunteers during the Express & Star's visit to the Good Shepherd Ministry and had nothing but praise.

Maxine said: "The volunteers here are lovely, they are really here for people and make a difference. They have helped us in so many ways recently, not just with meals but with assistance that is crucial to our day to day lives."



Volunteer Heriberto Garcia Vazquez in the kitchen



Stephen Dale and Maxine Price at the ministry



Good Shepherd admin manager Helen Holloway

Kind pupils hand over their party food



Pupils from Westcroft School at the E&S

SCHOOLCHILDREN have shown their caring nature by donating food left over from their Christmas party to our Feed A Family appeal.

Youngsters at Westcroft School in Wolverhampton were given the choice of keeping it for a later date or handing it over to help those less fortunate - they all voted to donate them. They have also been busy collecting hundreds of other donations of food, toilet-

ries and toys, which they then delivered to the Express & Star head office.

These are being passed on to food banks and other good causes across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Older pupils at the school, for students with complex learning needs, have been taught about some of the challenges people face in their lives in their citizenship and independent living skills lessons.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Man in crashed car had cardiac arrest

PARAMEDICS were called to help save a man who had suffered cardiac arrest in Halesowen as his car crashed into a wall.

West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to Stourbridge Road in Halesowen at about 9.50am last Thursday and an air ambulance was also sent to the scene.

An spokesman said: "Ambulance crews found a man who was in cardiac arrest. He had been rapidly extricated by firefighters after the car had collided with a bush, a post box and a wall." They managed to re-start his heart and he was taken on blue lights to hospital in Birmingham.

Fly-tipping fines have hit £120,000

FLY-TIPPERS in the West Midlands were fined a combined £120,000 in the past year – up from just £12,000 four years ago – according to new figures.

Local authorities across the region secured 295 fly-tipping prosecutions in 2016-17, up from just 67 in 2012-13.

Statistics released by the Government show a fly-tipping fines in the Midlands totalled £123,318 in 2016-17, a huge rise from 2012-13 when the combined fine was £12,954.

There were more than one million fly-tipping incidents in England in 2016-17, equivalent to 114 every hour.

Average house prices on the rise

THE price of the average home in Dudley has risen by £7,500 in the last year, as demand for property continues to overtake the supply.

Across the UK property prices have risen by 4.7 per cent to an average of £240,860, but this figures is hugely unbalanced by the price of properties in London and the South East.

In the West Midlands, on the border of the north/south property divide, the average is £186,351 and has risen 5.2 per cent. The latest figures from HM Land Registry show Dudley prices average £164,004, a rise of 4.8 per cent.

Santas on the run to boost hospice by £13k

THEY donned their red suits and Santa hats – and they raised £13,000 for charity.

Hundreds of joggers braved the testing conditions of heavy rain and cold to take over Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge in a bid to raise funds for the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The charity dubbed the response to the Santa Jog as 'overwhelming' following its cancellation the week before as snow and ice hit the region.

Hitting a farm bail saved pilot in crash

A MICROLIGHT pilot survived by crash landing on a large agricultural bale near Cleat, an air accident investigation has found.

The 43-year-old man lost control of the Pegasus Quantum before spiralling hundreds of feet to the ground during the incident in August 2016.

A report by the Air Accident Investigation Branch report can not explain how one of the wings folded before the crash. But it said the life of the pilot, who suffered serious injury, was saved by landing on a large agricultural bale.

Witness statements in the report describe the small aircraft spiralling down like a 'falling sycamore leaf'.

The pilot was left with little memory of what happened before the crash, which took place off Holy Cross Lane on August 15 last year. He received trauma care at the scene before being taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

The report states: "It appears that, following an event, the pilot lost control of the aircraft and was unable to recover it to normal flight before impacting the ground."

"A witness who saw the aircraft in the final moments reported that it had come down on top of a large farm bale, which had absorbed a lot of the impact energy."

The report continues: "The arrival on the large agricultural bale with its energy absorbing qualities was probably the main element that made this a survivable accident."

The report says that the pilot had flown to Otherton, near Penkridge, from Halfpenny Green, near Wombourne, in good conditions for his annual flight test but because of a problem with engine heat had decided to return to Halfpenny Green, when the incident happened.

Nine new homes at former pub site

WORK on nine houses on the site of a former landmark pub in Halesowen has been completed.

The development includes one detached and eight semi-detached homes, all constructed on the site of the former Wagon and Horses pub in Long Lane.

Halesowen-based estate agents Lex Allan Grove have put up sale boards in recent months with prices ranging from £192,000 to £220,000.

The popular pub was saved from closure by legendary Birmingham publican, Bob Nash, in 2010.

But due to a decline in footfall it abruptly closed in 2013 and was demolished shortly after. Planning permission was granted for houses by Dudley Council in November 2015.

Motivated pupils helping food bank



Caitlyn Plant, Liam Fotheringham, Dr Lisa Mason, CeCe Sammy, Carol Dealey, Lauren Parkes, and Ellie Chater

PUPILS in the Black Country donated to a food bank and enjoyed a performance from choir singers as part of a charity fun day.

Youngsters at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath donated 170kg of food to Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank.

Choir singers CeCe Sammy, Sirine, Asher Knight, Christie Alana and James CC performed songs and gave a motivational talk to more than 500 Year 7 and 8 students.

CeCe Sammy, who visited last Friday as part of the Speakers for Schools initiative, said: "Music reaches us sometimes when other things can't and being able to express yourself through music or any creative art is something we must

hold tightly and celebrate. I'm delighted to be here celebrating the day with the Forge students and hopefully making a difference."

Principal of Ormiston Forge Academy Andrew Burns said: "We speak a great deal about the Forge family, today we welcomed CeCe and her friends into our family."

"A family is all about looking out for one another and helping each other; it's incredibly humbling to see a group of people like Speakers For Schools, Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank, CeCe and Forge, come together to make a difference."

"If ever there was a great Christmas story, it's right here."

Historic pub is saved from the bulldozers

AN HISTORIC pub has been saved from demolition but houses will be built on the bowling green next to it.

The bulldozers were poised to flatten The Gate Inn, opposite Cradley Labour Club in Colley Gate, but it will now be converted into a house after Dudley Council planners said it was a 'heritage asset'.

Plans to build six houses on the bowling green next to the pub on the corner of Colley Gate and Temple Tree Lane, will still go ahead.

Dudley Council case officer Jenny North said in a planning report on the site: "Upon consideration it was felt that it failed to provide clear and convincing justification for the loss of the heritage asset."

"Following further discussion, the applicant agreed to retain (in the main) the public house and convert it into one dwelling."

Councillor Richard Body, who represents Cradley and Wollescote ward, welcomed the decision. He said: "Where the pub is positioned sadly there have been many shops there that have been closed for many years making the area look an eyesore."

"Having the pub stood in a state of disrepair as well just adds to it, so I am extremely pleased that houses will be built there."

"Being classed as a Heritage Asset it is important that we take care and make it look nice. Overall I feel this has been the best outcome."

Plans would involve the removal of a single storey rear extension to the building and its replacement with a new single storey extension.

There will be a rear parking court accessed off Maple Tree Lane for the new development with provision for two parking spaces for each of the properties. An electrically controlled gate would also secure the area from anti-social behaviour.



The Gate Inn

Don't be half-cut at the bar-bers



Brothers Joe and Adam Ingram at their barbers shop Xtreme Cutz where they have opened a bar

MAKE mine a short, back and cinder! Customers can order a pint with their haircut at a barber shop installed a fully-licensed bar.

Brothers Joe, of Cradley Heath and Adam Ingram, of Stourbridge, run Xtreme Cutz in Cradley Heath. Named Carol's Bar in memory of their mother who died in 2014, it was opened on Decem-

ber 11 and is believed to be the borough's first barber shop with a licensed bar.

Joe, aged 27, said: "It is touching to be able to open the bar in honour of our mother."

The opening date fell on Carol's birthday, and marked 18 years since Adam, 35, opened the business. The brothers, who grew

up in Halesowen, serve Special Cider, made at The Cider House in Quatt, Shropshire.

The bar took two months to build, and the brothers used businesses who are also their customers to carry out the work. Conditions of the licence means only people who pay for a haircut can be served alcohol.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Tip to stay open all but three days

COUNCIL chiefs have issued a reminder to residents that the borough's tip will be open over the Christmas period.

The Birmingham Street site in Stourbridge will be open for people from Dudley borough every day apart from Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. People can recycle Christmas trees, packaging and unwanted electrical goods at the site.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environment, said: "Christmas and New Year is the time of year when a lot of excess waste is generated, which needs to be disposed of in a responsible way."

Age challenge's £100k prize pot

ENTREPRENEURS across the West Midlands are being given the opportunity to win a slice of a £100,000 prize fund, designed to support development of technology that will help people in old age.

The first Centrica Active Ageing Challenge is looking for local start-ups with tech solutions that help meet the needs of an ageing society. Successful applicants will be asked to pitch to a team of industry experts in March. Applications should be submitted by February 5. Visit centrica.com/innovation/active-ageing website.

Concert marks 100 years since end of war

A CONCERT in Dudley will mark 100 years since the end of the First World War. The 1918 Memorial Concert is on March 24 in aid of the Mayor of Dudley's appeal at Dudley Town Hall. The 70-strong Restoration Chorus and Stourbridge Chamber Orchestra will perform with soprano Louise Maguire. Tickets £12 via (01384) 812812.

Scrabble is a success right from word go for these players

Report by Marion Brennan

JANET Street-Porter once described Scrabble as more addictive than cocaine and champagne.

The colourful broadcaster is one of many celebrity fans of the board game, a list that also includes Keanu Reeves, Madonna, Jonathan Ross, Sharon Stone, Charles Saatchi and Her Majesty The Queen.

With an estimated 30,000 games starting around the world every hour, it is the word puzzle that refuses to go out of fashion. While other board games come and go, Scrabble forges ahead, steadily selling two-and-a-half million sets every year.

With the festive season in full swing, the 84-year-old game will surely feature on thousands of Christmas shopping lists. No doubt, in many households the box will be brought out Christmas Day evening or Boxing Day to exercise the brain cells and ward off snoozing in front of the TV.

Wits

Among its biggest fans are a group which meets every month at Blackheath Library in Rowley Regis. The mainly elderly members say it keeps their brains active and they enjoy the social aspect of club afternoons.

Sheila Brueton, aged 86, a retired financial director, said: "One of the reasons I love Scrabble is because it's so different from working with numbers as I did in my job."

"I find Scrabble keeps the brain ticking over and keeps us all young. And it's not competitive. 'We don't play for the town clock, which is a phrase you will hear in whist.'"

There are two games going on at this particular meet-up, with one of the boards showing the word zags. Not normally seen without a preceding zig, it means a sharp change of direction and can be used on its own. To the fairweather player, who might only have a go at Christmas or on a rainy afternoon, it's an impressive word. But not to the Blackheath Library Scrabble crew who have become experts at words with obscure meanings. They even know some excellent two-letter words, an extremely useful means to use up remaining tiles.

A chart is kept beside the board with a list of 123 little-known but acceptable two-letter words endorsed by their bible, the Chambers Scrabble Dictionary. You don't need to know the meaning of handy fillers like bo and da, only that you can use them. The aim of the game is to get the longest word you can,



Barbara Betts, Carole Green, Sheila Brueton and Beryl Smith enjoy a game of scrabble at Blackheath Library

using all seven tiles, earning yourself a 50-point bonus. That rarely happens.

The highest single-play score on record is 392 points for ca-ziques, the word for ancient Mexican princes, played during a match in Manchester in 1982 and still a world record.

Eleanor Hebbard, a 75-year-old retired administrator at Rowley College, once played a word that gave her a score of 144. So stunned was she that she took a photograph. "Did you cheat?" asks Iris Wilkinson, 84, a former colleague. "Not that time," replies Eleanor. Humour is definitely a shared trait of these play-

ers. Barbara Betts, 64, a former hospital clerk, says: "We have a laugh - especially with the words we put down sometimes, which we couldn't repeat."

Blackheath, which meets every third Monday in the month, is one of 4,000 clubs worldwide - the board is printed in 29 languages - who regularly play.

The Blackheath players think the game is more popular than ever with young people - although possibly not with men. "You need patience - that's why not many husbands are interested in playing," added Eleanor

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Murder victim was too friendly, too trusting and he paid with his life

FRIENDLY Simon Johnson ignored the advice of pals to stop inviting people he met in the pub back to his home – and paid with his life.

Now teenager Damilola Johnson is facing a life sentence for his murder.

The 19-year-old plunged a knife four times into the body of Mr Johnson after the 41-year-old was woken while he and a 15-year-old youth stole plants from a cannabis farm at the home of the victim.

Damilola Johnson was unanimously convicted of murder and burglary by the Wolverhampton Crown Court jury.

A younger defendant, now 17, was acquitted of murder but found guilty of manslaughter. He had admitted burglary. They are to be sentenced in the new year.

Mr Simon Denison QC, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court: "The deceased was a naturally trusting man – too trusting, as it turned out."

Discovered

The victim had lived alone in the three-bedroom semi in Cradley Road, Netherton, since 'amicably' parting with his wife and two children following the break down of their marriage in of 2015.

Window fitter Mr Johnson was discovered when colleague Max Richardson came to collect him for work around three hours after the murder took place on August 11 last year. The front door was locked but the living room window wide open with smears of blood around the frame.

Simon Johnson was a heavy cannabis user. After a chance meeting with Jack Griffin at the Waggon and

Horses in Cradley Heath on August 5, he invited the teenager and his friends Clayton Pritchard and Abbey Hughes, all aged 18, to carry on drinking at the Cradley Road address. Griffin repaid the act of kindness by stealing the host's mobile phone and selling it for £180 the following day.

Mr Johnson made the mistake of showing Pritchard the cannabis growing in an upstairs room opposite his bedroom. The teenager wasted no time in telling his friends, triggering a sequence of events that led to murder.

Mr Richardson recalled: "Simon smoked a lot of weed and had shown me the grow. It was 15 or so plants under lamps in a tent. He said he was not responsible for it, just renting out the room. He said it helped to pay the bills."

Griffin and his two friends called at Mr Johnson's home again on the evening of August 10. Mr Johnson and the three teenagers spent the evening drinking, smoking cannabis, playing video games and watching TV until he decided to go to bed, allegedly locking the front door and telling the trio of visitors to leave through the unlocked living room window. They each secretly took a cannabis plant, and others had heard about the cannabis.

Only the two burglars know exactly what happened but the youth told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Damilola Johnson delivered the fatal blows after accidentally bumping into a bed and waking the older man.

Mr Johnson suffered a fractured eye socket in the vicious attack that followed as he tried to grab the intruder while the younger thief ran from the address, where he had stolen credit cards during the early hours of August 11.

The fingerprints of both defendants were found on a bin bag full of can-



Simon Johnson – died after being woken by thieves

nabis discovered alongside Mr Johnson when his body was found on the upstairs landing by his workmate less than four hours later. CCTV film captured their escape after the killing.

Glove

A glove with traces of the DNA of Damilola Johnson and the blood of the victim was found discarded in a nearby street while a knife taken from



Damilola Johnson – burglar who became a killer

the kitchen of the house – and thought to be the murder weapon – was discovered in the front garden of the house with the victim's blood on it.

Two more knives were later found behind a garden wall in nearby Durham Road where they had been hidden by the 17-year-old defendant as he left the scene.

Mr Johnson had been stabbed four times – one blow almost severed

his aorta – after being woken by the thieves. Each had a knife to strip the cannabis plants but one of these was used to end Simon Johnson's life.

Damilola Johnson, of no fixed address, and the 17-year-old were remanded in custody until January 12 when they will be sentenced by Judge James Burbidge QC. He warned: "There will be significant sentences."

Widow's moving tribute

THE widow of Simon Johnson has told of the impact of his murder on her and their two children.

The 41-year-old was knifed to death by Damilola Johnson, no relation, during a bungled burglary. The 19-year-old and a youth, aged 15 at the time but now 17, were stealing plants from a cannabis farm at the house in Cradley Road, Netherton, where the victim lived alone, on August 11 last year.

Roz Johnson, who separated from Simon in August 2015, said: "Those involved in Simon's death did not just take his life, they took the people that our daughters and I used to be too."

"The last 16 months without Si can not be described in a few words but the world is an emptier, lonelier and scarier place for us now."

"The unimaginable and horrifying act of murder has become a harrowing reality for us and the impact of his death has reached, and continues to reach, far and wide. Our daughters, aged 18 and 11, have had their dad taken from them in a sudden, unexpected, brutal and violent way without a chance for a goodbye. That is something they, and I, will never recover from."

Difficult

"Telling our daughters what had happened to their dad was the most difficult thing I have ever had to do and there have been countless difficult times since."

"We have been forced to deal with situations, experiences and emotions we didn't think possible and although we know Simon would be so proud of us for the dignity, strength and courage we have shown, it's no real comfort as he should be here."

"Simon and I had separated but we were still in the middle of raising our girls together and we had so many plans for the future as a family. He will be loved, missed and remembered always."

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Banks – not wine bars but reason to whine on

A FEW years ago, NatWest bank had an advertising slogan which was, if nothing else, repetitive.

It seemed that every time you switched the TV on there was some customer groaning “my bank’s now a trendy wine bar.” The message was clear. Unlike other banks, NatWest realised that to serve customers you actually had to have a network of branches they can go to.

How times have changed. NatWest has just announced the closure of 197 branches, saying that more people are turning to internet banking, with the number of people calling into branches falling by 40 per cent since 2014. Maybe so, but I guess if you keep closing branches – and cutting hours – then you are bound to see fewer people calling into them.

The company suggests that people may prefer to use a “banking app” instead. Now I don’t really know what a banking app is, but I’m fairly certain I wouldn’t prefer to use it. What happens if somebody nicks your dog and bone? How many passwords are we expected to remember?

I can see why banks want more people to move online. The latest closure programme will see staff numbers cut by 680, and think of all the money saved on rent, rates and utility bills. But what’s in it for the customer? The very thought of having my bank account at the mercy of the hackers brings me out in a cold sweat. The idea that I would have my life savings in an account protected only by a password I will struggle to remember seems utterly ridiculous, even if the interest rate is half a per cent higher.

Of course, given the state of the licensed trade, it is probably unlikely that any of the latest NatWest branches will become trendy wine bars.

Perhaps there should be a new advertising campaign. “My bank’s boarded up and covered in graffiti.”

□ □ □

IN case you hadn’t noticed we had a bit of snow last week. I know it took a few people by surprise, but these things tend to happen in December.

Now I don’t want to go all Four Yorkshiremen on you, but I live on the top of a hill and drove 25 miles to work through what was supposed to be the coldest place in the country. It really isn’t that hard; just pack a shovel, broom, and extra food, set out a bit earlier and take a different route. Anyone can do it.

It’s funny how one of the things which seems to bring out the snowflakes is, well, a few snowflakes.

Technical crooks don’t know how to use a hacksaw



Prince Edward – chose strange outfit for a formal photograph at his home



Pope Francis wants to drop ‘lead us not into temptation’ from the Lord’s Prayer



Michael Gove – says leaving the EU might improve animal-welfare standards

Unlocking the way to deter car thieves

TRAVELLING in a mate’s smart new car the other day, I noticed a steering-wheel lock on the back seat. Remember those? There was a time, in the days when car locks were dead easy to pick, when a bright yellow disc bolted to your steering wheel was a deterrent. Next, for a few years, car locks became really hard to crack; then they got too keylessly hi-tech for their own good. Today, thanks to the magic of the microchip, any scally with the right electronic gizmo can drive off any limo he chooses. Hence the re-birth of the humble steering-wheel lock, the ultimate deterrent against crooks who are experts on computer programming but don’t know how to use a hacksaw.

ON a visit to Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Environment Secretary Michael Gove says leaving the EU might allow Britain to impose higher animal-welfare standards and combat puppy smuggling. Why was this not mentioned during the referendum campaign? Why were our heart-strings not tugged by the ultimate campaign slogan? Vote Brexit – or the puppies get it.

POPE Francis wants to drop “lead us not into temptation” from the Lord’s Prayer, on the grounds that God does not lead humans to sin. His Holiness suggests replacing it with “do not let us fall into temptation,” explaining: “It’s Satan who leads us into temptation, that’s his department.”

HANG on a moment. The only reason that Satan can tempt humans is that the Almighty made us so very temptable (remember that

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



unfortunate business with the apple and serpent?). Most of the Old Testament is about God creating sinners and then punishing them for sinning. It’s a bit daft which may explain why the priesthood kept the Bible in Latin for so many centuries and had a plentiful supply of firewood to deal with any peasant heard uttering the words: “It’s a bit daft.”

KIDS at a primary school in Telford who forgot their PE kit were invited to take part wearing their underpants. At least one parent complained but the authorities insisted that all the pupils enjoyed the lesson. I bet. I recall with a shudder being sent into the school swimming bath naked, aged 12, having carelessly left my trunks at home. Everyone enjoyed that, too. Except me. I really must sort out that claim for post-traumatic stress.

HE is 53 and presumably allowed to choose his own clothes. So whatever possessed Prince Edward to pose for a formal photograph at his home, Bagshot Park, wearing a bow tie, velvet smoking jacket, tartan trousers and monogrammed slippers? Most odd.

CLASSY response to my item on the snowflake generation from a reader who points out: “I

don’t object to the term Snowflake. We’re seeing at the moment what they can do when they get together, aren’t we?” At the time he wrote, a few billion snowflakes flexed their muscles and paralysed the nation. But then they very quickly got overheated and ran away.

OUR changing language. According to the BBC website: “The snow showers have swept across into London.” Meanwhile, Mail Online reports someone being ‘murdered to death’.

WE are still a long way from being a fully online society. The Office for National Statistics reckons nearly half of single pensioners have no internet access. And it’s a fair guess that many of these older folks are claiming benefits, or at least trying to. Any Answers (Radio 4) took a call from a woman who, having no internet access in her home, had to use a computer at her local library to apply for benefit. When her passport and driving licence were not accepted for identification purposes, the system advised her to download an app to her smartphone. Seriously. That was my angriest moment of the week and I dare say some of you shared it.

MY sympathy for starving songbirds evaporated in the first 48 hours of Ye Great Freeze. If the little idiots would only eat, instead of posing and posturing at each other, they would fare a lot better. Robins bully blackbirds who bully tits who bully wagtails who waste hundreds of calories wagging, as the name suggests, their tails. So much wasted energy, so little brainpower.

TALKING POINT



Payouts are taking cash from those in real need

IT’S good to know that, while the country awaits the outcome of Brexit negotiations, there are still some inevitabilities during uncertain times.

We can all be sure of death, taxes and Australia winning the Ashes. Now, it seems unwanted phone calls are a constant. We have all had them. People trying to sell you something, claims for PPI, better energy deals. But in this day and age of cost-cutting and austerity, it seems there is a new scourge on society, spurious accident claims.

‘Have You Had An Accident At Work?’ the helpline commercial yells. “Our records tell me you’ve had an accident recently,” says the voice on the phone.

And they know that how, exactly? Of course the standard response would be something along the lines of: “No, but you will have one if you keep calling.” Or throw them completely by claiming your head fell off, like comedian Rob Beckett.

Seriously, though, it seems the compensation craze is the latest fad. Often we hear of members of the public making spurious claims for minor incidents – or in some cases no accident at all – just to cash in. More astonishingly, supposedly cash-strapped authorities are paying out.

Croydon Council, for example, paid out nearly £6 million in personal injury claims over the last three years. These, staggeringly included £43,000 to a child who needed surgery to remove a splinter after sitting on a playground bench.

There was an £81,000 to a claimant who broke a leg by jumping over the gate at a locked car park and another payout of £181,000 to someone who tripped on a pavement damaged during works. And let’s not forget the £18,000 for the schoolboy hit by a javelin during a PE lesson.

A police officer even received £12,000 after being bitten by a flea, while in August a woman was ‘hit’ by a taxi in an alleged attempt to cash in. The taxi firm’s boss admitted that without the dashcam footage, they would not have been protected against a potential payout.

John O’Connell, of the TaxPayers’ Alliance, said the ‘compensation culture’ diverted cash from essential services such as social care and road maintenance.

Too right. With the NHS in dire straits, care homes closing and important transport links axed, one can see his point. But these claimants serve to line their own pockets without a thought for what tax-payers’ money is spent on. We all know how The Boy Who Cried ‘Wolf’ ends. We can only hope for a similar outcome when these ‘injured parties’ really are hurt.

MARK SHIPP



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SOURCE: The Newspaper Society - Consumer Catalyst 2014

We need more libraries that open longer

DUDLEY Council, under Pete Lowe and his Labour team, did the Conservative Government's bidding and slashed the hours that our libraries opened. We used to be able to get into Halesowen library up to 7pm. That was all stopped.

Then I read that libraries in the borough are used by 18 per cent of the people and the percentage has fallen. On the face of things it may look like a bad headline, but as my old dad used to say: "Look deeper, kid, and you'll find it is hardly surprising?" If the politicians cut the hours that Buckingham Palace was opened - currently having a refurbishment costing £350 million -

you can bet that visitor numbers would fall. It is obvious, isn't it?

Over the years, we have seen the library - a hub of this community - being run down with a reduction in staff, floors for library use and in its stock. There has always been in place a draconian management.

I do admire the hard-working staff who do their best to remain positive. It is to the dedicated staff we should look to guidance for improvements, because they know the library and its users.

Councillor Ken Finch warns us of the dangers of having volunteers running centres and such like. A Labour councillor! From the very party who

cut the hours and gave libraries away to Greenwich Leisure. I remember the Labour Council Leader at the time saying it was exciting!

Take a real Labour man, Jeremy Corbyn, who is against such cuts, and he would agree that the Labour council made wrong decisions in office time after time. The emphasis is too often on the negative. Why not open new libraries? Let's educate our children and adults since we never stop learning, we progress. The money is always there for war, but not it seems for libraries, leisure centres and the NHS.

C STOLL
Halesowen

Prank was stupid and not funny

WHO in their right mind decides with his friends to cement his head with Polyfilla inside a microwave?

I have read and heard things in my time which beggar belief. However, the man in a child's body takes the biscuit.

I dare say there could be many answers. So much for a YouTube joke - I think not!

Firefighters' precious time was taken up by this man and his friends. I hope they hang their heads in shame.

It would be justifiable for the fire service to charge this person for the time they spent rescuing him!

As a footnote, I dare say Polyfilla works!

Why not stick his feet in it, sit him on a bench, and let us all go and tell him what an idiot he's been?

DEIRDRE WOOD
Coseley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

The council can't grit every road

I HAVE read a large number of complaints on social media about gritting of roads during the cold spell.

I even read one that said it was not good to leave people unable to get off their drives for two or three days.

Come on people, how on earth can you expect councils to grit every road in the borough?

Main roads and bus routes have to take priority. It is hard to get about, I know, but we are all in the same boat that live in side roads. It's tough but we only get snow now and again.

The options are stay in, risk going out, clear it yourself or move to a main road in preparation for the next lot of snow.

The council cannot achieve the impossible and your road has no more precedence than any other side road.

JENNY JAMES
Wordsley

New deal sounds like extortion racket

EXTORTION rackets can take many forms, for example:

a) "We've made ya an offer ya caint refuse. We've sent ya tha ear and tha little finger. Hand over tha £40,000 and you'll get tha kid back as long as ya don't bring in da cops."

OR

b) "Okay so you'll pay the 40+ billion in readies and maybe we'll give ya the worthless trade deal as long as ya don't tell ya taxpayers about tha cash."

Both are perfect examples, the only difference is the number of zeros on the payment.

ALAN M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

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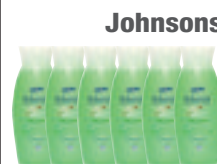


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League of Gentlemen to go local at Arena

THE League of Gentlemen is set to bring its first UK tour in 12 years to Birmingham next year.

The BAFTA-winning show, starring Reece Shearsmith, Steve Pemberton, Mark Gatiss and Jeremy Dyson, follows the lives of the bizarre townspeople that reside in the fictional Royston Vasey.

The series ended in 2002, and was followed by a film The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse and a stage production The League of Gentlemen Are Behind You! in 2005.

It returned to TV screens this week to update viewers with the strange, and often disturbing, goings-on at Royston Vasey.

In a statement the cast of the live show said: "The League of Gentlemen started as a live show over 20 years ago and in many ways performing in front of an audience gives us the biggest thrill of all. We're overjoyed to be taking the citizens of Royston Vasey on a road-trip and can't wait to see all the wonderful local places."

The League of Gentlemen will appear at Arena Birmingham on September 14, 2018, and tickets went on sale at 9am yesterday (Wednesday).

Chimps chomping on festive veg at zoo



Lower Primates Senior Keeper Jodie Dryden with veggie feast

THE winter weather may have meant some cancelled festive meals for the human population of Dudley but provided a bonus for apes at Dudley Zoo.

Sprouts and potatoes were on the menu for seven female chimps at the Castle Hill attraction when the recent heavy snow meant not so many folks turning up for meals at a local pub.

They enjoyed a festive feast thanks to a donation from nearby business The Fellows pub.

Bosses at The Broadway bar donated eight large tubs of leftover steamed seasonal carrots, sprouts, potatoes and peas to primate keepers at Dudley Zoo, who dished them out to their grateful apes.

Lower primates senior keeper, Jodie Dryden, said: "We were offered the freshly steamed vegetables from the pub staff, who had surplus leftovers following the recent wintry weather."

"We're thankful to The Fellows for thinking of us and the girls all enjoyed tucking into an early Christmas dinner."

More than 1,000 empty homes despite crisis

MORE than 1,000 homes across Sandwell are empty – with almost 300 vacant for at least five years, new figures show.

Hundreds of private properties were classed as 'long-term vacant' including 83 which have not been lived in for 10 years.

It comes as housing bosses continue to battle a mounting housing waiting list in the borough. Figures published under the Freedom of Information Act showed there are currently a total of 1,087 properties which have been empty for more than six months. Of these, 666 have been vacant for two years, 214 for five years and 83 for a decade.

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling said the number of empty privately owned properties was 'massively frustrating', particularly as the authority faces a constant challenge to house families, as well as having to find land to build new developments.

He said that empty private homes were contributing to a 'national housing crisis'.

Cannabis factory burglary bust

A MAN who had fallen on hard times allowed his home in Wordley to be used as a cannabis factory.

Jason Bray, aged 41, got chatting to a man outside a pub soon after taking the lease on the three-bedroom property in Brierley Hill Road.

He allowed it to be used for growing cannabis plants on the understanding he would receive payment when the drugs were sold, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. But he was caught after a burglary at the house – reported by neighbours – during which some of the plants were stolen.

Mr Mark Phillips, prosecuting, said police

were alerted to the break-in in May and discovered a cannabis factory in full operation inside.

Seventy one plants in the early stages of production were found along with 50 empty pots, those which had been stolen in the burglary.

Value

The total potential street value of the crop was estimated to be between £35,000 and £100,000.

Investigating officers found a council tax bill addressed to Bray at the property.

In the meantime he had contacted a solicitor and voluntarily went to the police station to own up to his part in the operation.

Mr Henry Skudra, defending, argued Bray had taken no part in the running of the operation and had been suffering from depression following a series of family tragedies and had started smoking cannabis after losing his job.

"This was a poor reaction to a set of adverse personal circumstances," said Mr Skudra.

Bray, of Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, who admitted allowing his home to be used for the production of cannabis, was given a 12-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months. He was also ordered to carry out 120 hours unpaid work and pay £100 towards costs.

Drifters bring decades of soul

VETERAN American soul group The Drifters will be performing at Dudley Town Hall on May 25.

The Drifters were founded in June 1953, by George Treadwell and Ahmet Ertegun, founder of Atlantic Records. Since their creation the band has featured over 65 vocalists.

Their hits include Saturday Night at the Movies, Under The Boardwalk, On Broadway and Save The Last Dance for Me.

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10 Dedicated carer Lynne wins national award

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, December 21, 2017

A SELFLESS carer has been honoured with a national prize – with her bosses saying she would ‘crawl on broken glass’ to help others if she needed to.

Lynne Higgins, 47, from Nether-ton, won the caregiver of the year award over 8,000 other people from across the UK for her dedication to her job caring for the elderly.

Mrs Higgins, who works across Dudley borough and parts of Sandwell, has been known to go the extra mile.

The mother-of-two was honoured in the Home Instead Senior Care awards. She once bought a cuddly toy dog for a client with dementia who loved it so much she was even cremated with it.

Mrs Higgins also helped another client called Beryl, aged 84, walk again after a lengthy stay in hospital where she went for treatment after she had a fall that knocked the confidence.

Julie Williams, co-owner of Home

Instead Senior Care Dudley and Sandwell South, said: “I know, hand on heart, that she would crawl on broken glass to a client if they needed her.”

“We are incredibly proud to see that Lynne has been recognised from thousands of others as she believes so passionately in the care she delivers.”

Family

Mrs Higgins who lives with her husband Steve also cares for two sons, 21-year-old Joe who has Worster drought syndrome, a type of Cerebral Palsy, and 13-year-old Peter who has Autism and insulin controlled diabetes.

Mrs Higgins said: “It was amazing to win – I really did not expect to at all.”

“To me, I don’t feel like I’m doing anything special, I just treat clients like they are my family – if you don’t treat them like family then they’re not getting the best care.”



Lynne Higgins, centre, with Home Instead owner Ian Williams and business development manager Susan Love

Hundreds oppose ‘garden city’ homes plan at former tip

NEARLY 400 people have called for plans to build homes on a former tip in the Black Country to be scrapped.

Sandwell Council wants to create a large housing development on land off Temple Way, near Rattlechain Lagoon, Tividale, as part of its Dudley Port ‘garden city’ masterplan. But the proposals have raised concerns among people in the area with a petition having been handed to council bosses.

Ian Carroll, The Friends of Sheepwash Nature Reserve group secretary, said: “In terms of the specific site there’s almost universal opposition amongst from local residents. The majority of signatures are from people who live in the surrounding streets. They included Gladstone drive, Law Close, Temple Way. People in that area, many of them remember all the extensive tipping. As for The Friends of Sheepwash, we want to see that area for wild life.”

A total of 385 signatures were collected over a couple of weeks. Petitioners say they would like to see the site, situated between Sheepwash Local Nature Reserve and the Temple Way Estate, retained for wildlife.

The council has set itself a target of building 250 homes at the former brick works, that was later used for disposing of waste.

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Accused says kidnap of model was a sham

A BLACK Country man accused of kidnapping a model has claimed the whole thing was staged so she could become famous.

Lukasz Herba, from Tividale, said Chloe Ayling was in on the plot and that the alleged kidnap, which took place in Italy, was a stunt.

The 30-year-old has been held by Italian police and a court in Milan last week rejected his claim that model Miss Ayling, 20, was in on the ‘crime’ to gain publicity.

She claims she was snatched, drugged and held hostage for six days after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan in July.

Lukasz Herba and his brother Michal, 35, were subsequently arrested and accused of kidnapping the model. Polish-born Lukasz, who was living in Tividale, has claimed they already knew each other and that she agreed to a fake abduction in order to become a celebrity, according to reports.

His lawyer, Katia Kolakowska, told a national newspaper: “He says the kidnap was a fabrication. They planned it together so she would become famous.”

Invented

Lukasz Herba has insisted he did not knowingly take part in any crime.

A judge at the Corte d’Assise in Milan rejected an application by Ms Kolakowska, to force London mother-of-one Chloe to travel to Italy to be questioned in court.

Police claim the brothers are part of a group which sell women as sex slaves on the dark web to buyers in the Middle East.

Defence lawyers suggested the entire case may be a ‘publicity stunt’ to boost Ms Ayling’s career. But Miss Ayling’s former manager Phil Green has said the lawyers are ‘in cloud cuckoo land’ by suggesting the kidnap was staged.

Ms Ayling claimed she was sedated and bundled into the boot of a car on July



Chloe Ayling – drugged



Lukasz Herba – accused

11, then held in a remote farmhouse. Miss Ayling has appeared on various television shows to tell her story.

Lukasz Herba was arrested after delivering Ms Ayling to the British Consulate in Milan six days after she was allegedly kidnapped.

His brother Michal was arrested by the National Crime Agency on a European Arrest Warrant in August and is fighting extradition to Italy.



Simon Sims and Pauline Whitehouse in Simon's pre-slim T-shirt

Slimline Simon loses third of body weight in seven months

HE used to be 25 stone and lived on a diet of takeaways, ready meals, crisps and biscuits. But in a quest to get fit and find love, 51-year-old Simon Sims decided enough was enough and lost an extraordinary eight stone in just 28 weeks.

The Stourbridge man joined Slimming World back in May and teamed up with consultant Pauline Whitehouse who had previously lost nine stone herself.

Mr Sims said: "I had to do some-

thing or my outlook did not look good. My weight ballooned to 25 stone, I lacked confidence, had no friends and my health was suffering. I walked past a Slimming World group at Chawn Hill Church in Pedmore, and I heard clapping and cheering and decided this was my opportunity to do something about my weight.

"I have been a long term carer

for my parents for the last 10 years. I lived on fast food, takeaways, ready meals and snacked on crisps and biscuits."

Mr Sims bagged Mr Sleek 2017 at the Slimming World Ball at the Copthorne Hotel.

Mr Sims said: "Over the 28 weeks I have made some amazing friends and best of all I have just met a lovely lady who I have fallen in love with. I am so looking forward to the future, 2018 looks so

Firm funds path at town's historic park

A NEW path has been created at a popular Dudley park thanks to money from a landfill grant.

Ibstock Cory Environment Trust, which has a base in Dudley, provides money each year for community projects.

This year, the waste firm has given £15,000 toward a new path taking people across an area called The Green at Priory Park in Dudley.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare said: "Priory Park is one of the best in Dudley and the Priory ruins have inclusive access for the elderly and disabled. The Green, in contrast, had a crazy paving path built in the 1960s, so it was important to upgrade the path so everyone can use it safely."

Angela Haymonds, secretary of Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust said: "ICET is delighted to have provided funding to enhance Priory Park. We hope the path across The Green encourages more people to use it."

Sex assault instructor's prison term is increased

Report by Marion Brennan

A DRIVING instructor who sexually touched teenaged pupils has had his prison sentence extended after two more victims spoke up.

Gary Rolinson, who ran the Kingswinford-based 500+ Driving School, would touch his students on the thigh when they made errors, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The first pupil, aged 17, blocked Rolinson's hand, telling him: "I get the picture, there's no need to do that." When the instructor touched him on his genitals over his clothes, he grabbed his hand and told him to 'pack it in.'

But the predatory instructor became 'quite blatant' in his behaviour, making lewd comments even in front of a female pupil to whom they were giving a lift, said Ms Samantha Crabb, prosecuting.

He told the second pupil, who was just 16, that touching him on the thigh 'helped with his clutch control'.

The teenager tried to treat his behaviour as a joke but Rolinson became emboldened when he realised the young man was not going to report him.

One time he told him to stop the car in a country lane and asked him to have intercourse. The youngster felt the best response was to laugh it off but the instructor reminded him of the request during subsequent lessons.

Admitted

The defendant, now 62, last week admitted 10 offences of sexual touching involving the two young men between 2009 and 2014. His appearance at Wolverhampton Crown Court came almost two years after he was jailed for similar offences involving six teenagers during driving lessons between 2012 and 2014.

Following a 14-day trial Rolinson was found guilty of 13 offences of sexual assault and one of causing a person to engage in sexual activity.

On that occasion a pupil spoke anonymously about the devastating effect Rolinson's behaviour had had on him.

He said: "I felt vulnerable and violated. Because I'm a boy I felt as though I couldn't say anything. It was as if people would laugh at me or not believe me."

Increasing Rolinson's four-year sentence to five years and nine months, Judge James Burbidge, QC, ordered that he register as a sex offender for life. He praised his victims for having the courage to come forward, saying they had carried the burden of Rolinson's 'secret'.

2,800 drink-drivers caught in 12 months

MORE than 2,500 motorists have been charged with drink-driving in the West Midlands and Staffordshire Police force areas in the last year.

In the 12 months to May, there were 1,833 people charged in the West Midlands - 6.47 per 10,000 population - and 990 in Staffordshire - 8.89 per 10,000.

A total of 1,112 drivers were charged in the West Mercia force area - 8.9 per 10,000.

The results, based on Freedom of Information requests, have prompted calls for better public transport in rural areas and warnings to anyone tempted to drink and drive over the festive period not to do so as it could result in tragedy, prison and a road ban.

A total of 31 forces out of 45 provided figures.

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Whole lotta cash for Plant's Aston Martin



Robert Plant with the Aston Martin he had in the 1970s and 80s

Pictures: Nicholas Mee & Co

LED Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant's former Aston Martin is up for sale – and is sure to cost a whole lotta cash.

The Black Country rock legend bought the DB5 in the early 1970s and sold it in 1986 to a car collecting father/son team in the Midlands. The red DB5 is a 1965 model with 62,400 miles on the clock, and it has undoubtedly seen some Good Times (and) Bad Times.

In recent years the car has been restored and is now in 'an exemplary condition' according to Aston Martin

specialists Nicholas Mee & Co who are selling it. Its colour is described as 'Dubonnet Rosso' while the interior is tan with four seats. A price for the motor is only available on request – with its seller estimating it could fetch more than £1 million.

Plant, 69, who was born in West Bromwich and went to school at the King Edward VI Grammar School in Stourbridge, sold the car in the '80s. It was entrusted to Chapman Spooner for restoration work and has been owned by Nicholas Mee & Co since 2008. A description says: "This iconic car can most accurately be described as having received, 'a Whole Lotta Love'."



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Jokers go wild in Jack's Grand pantomime show

FE-FI-FO-FUN – expect some giant laughs at Wolverhampton's big panto Jack And The Beanstalk.

It's silly, a bit saucy and spectacular too, delivering all the traditional pantomime clichés with a local twist in a guaranteed Grand night out.

Jack And The Beanstalk, on at the Lichfield Street theatre until January 14, has got famous faces off the telly, lots of pop songs, jokey mentions for local towns, a hissable villain, a flamboyant dame and... Super Yam.

Doreen Tipton's latest panto stunt, after wowing the audiences in her debut on a mobility scooter in last year's Aladdin, is to don a superhero outfit in a panto closing scene that nearly brought the house down.

Doreen (aka Walsall actress Gill Jordan) injects typically downbeat Black Country humour into a show that has no shortage of jokers.

Slapstick

Adam C Booth (perhaps best known as Keith Lemon's TV 'brother') is a highly energetic slapstick Simple Simon, whilst former Lichfield Garrick stalwart Ian Adams has some of the best lines and lots of stunning frocks as Dame Trot. But you may hope that some of their ruder double entendres fly over the children's heads.

Pop and stage star Gareth Gates shows a nice knack for humour too as Jack. I like him crooning If You Leave Me Cow to Daisy after he exchanges her for a bag of beans. His scene with love interest Jill (Sarah Vaughan, in fine voice) which is constantly interrupted by Grand Simon was a howl, only topped by Mother Nature, played by Grand favourite Lisa Riley, with Dame, Simon and Doreen's chaotic 12 Days of Christmas.



They've bean had – Gareth Gates and Lisa Riley as Mother Nature in the panto



It ay cown' fair – Doreen Tipton is floored by Daisy the 'Coo' at the Grand

The musical highlights, accompanied by hard-working dancers, included versions of Can't Stop The Feeling and Rather Be.

Gareth's big number was, of course, his chart-topping cover of Unchained Melody (the second top selling single of the noughties).

You always need some baddies and former The Bill actor Graham Cole fit

the bill as Fleshcreep, main henchman for a giant who made a big, and I mean BIG, appearance in the second act.

Credit to for another Garrick regular, Julie Paton, who was a touch of class as the operatic-voiced giant's Harp.

If you've Bean you know, otherwise, give this panto a fe-fi-go.

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The Lion King

The smash-hit story of Simba the lion and his Serengeti journey from runaway to ruler of the plains has been a sell-out success ever since it opened on Broadway in 1997 and at London's Lyceum Theatre in 1999.

A theatre adaptation of a Disney classic, with music by Elton John and Tim Rice, a musical score by Hans Zimmer, arrangements by Lebo M and a plot loosely based on Hamlet, this multiple Tony and Olivier award-winning show has become the top-earning title in box office history, surpassing Lloyd Webber's Phantom of the Opera.

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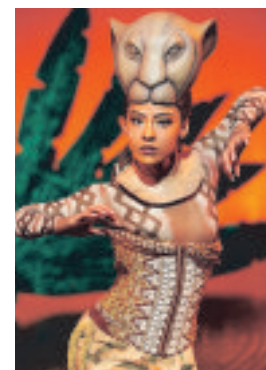
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Based on the Paramount film written by Mike White and starring Jack Black, this rocking stage musical is produced by Andrew Lloyd Webber who has added 14 new songs to the score, which also includes all the original songs from the film.

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"Terrific fun"

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Christmas Eve

BBC 1



Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show, on at 8.30pm

6.00 Breakfast 7.25 Match of the Day (R) 9.05 FILM: Planes (2013) ★★ 10.30 FILM: The Santa Clause (1994) ★★★ 12.00 Life in the Snow Gordon Buchanan meets animals that live in snowy conditions. (R) 1.00 BBC News; Weather. 1.15 Songs of Praise: The Big Sing Katherine Jenkins and JB Gill present a carol concert from the Royal Albert Hall. 1.45 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas Shaun causes mayhem at a country fair. (R) 2.15 Hammy's Boomerang Adventure Over the Hedge short spin-off. (R) 2.20 FILM: Monsters University (2013) Animated comedy prequel, with the voices of John Goodman and Billy Crystal. ★★★

BBC 2



The annual service from King's College, Carols from King's, 5.45pm

6.15 Nature's Weirdest Events (R) 7.00 Island Parish Shetland (R) 7.30 FILM: The Prince and Me (2004) Romantic comedy, starring Julia Stiles and Luke Mably. ★★ 9.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown (R) 10.15 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series. 11.45 Mary Berry's Absolute Christmas Favourites (R) 12.20 The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas Dave Myers and Si King create a series of festive recipes. 1.20 Alex Polizzi's Perfect Christmas The hotelier presents a guide to entertaining at home over the festive period. (R) 2.20 Cheetahs - Growing Up Fast Two years in the lives of a cheetah mother and her cubs. (R)

ITV



Bradley Walsh hosts, A Christmas Chase: Celebrity Special, 5.50pm

6.00 CITV: Sooty. (R) 6.10 Bottom Knockout Street (R) 6.20 Bottom Knockout Street (R) 6.35 Dino Dana (R) 6.45 Super 4 (R) 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story (R) 7.05 On Nom Stories 7.10 Nerds & Monsters (R) 7.20 Nerds & Monsters (R) 7.30 The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.10 Horrid Henry (R) 8.25 Make It Pop (R) 8.55 Scrambled! Christmas Stocking (R) 9.25 Save Money: Good Food (R) 9.55 FILM: Jack Frost (1998) ★ 11.50 Catchphrase Christmas Special (R) 12.45 ITV News and Weather; Weather. 12.55 FILM: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002) ★★★

Ch4



Child Genius vs Celebrities Christmas Special, on at 8.00pm

7.00 FILM: The Rugrats in Paris: The Movie (2000) Animated adventure, with the voice of Christine Cavanaugh. ★★ 8.15 The Big Bang Theory (R) 8.40 The Big Bang Theory (R) 9.05 Jamie's Quick & Easy Food (R) 9.40 Christmas Brunch With guests Anton Du Beke, Danny Mac and Tom Fletcher. 12.40 Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life Paul shares his favourite Mediterranean recipes on a trip to Cyprus. Last in the series. (R) 1.10 Jamie's Italian Christmas Jamie Oliver cooks a festive meal with an Italian twist. (R) 2.10 The Simpsons A corporation buys Springfield Elementary School. (R) 2.40 The Simpsons An adult Bart and Lisa return home for Christmas with their parents. (R)

Ch5



Last in the series, The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas, on at 8.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.20 FILM: Gone with the Wind (1939) A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roguish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. ★★★ 1.35 FILM: Oklahoma! (1955) A farm girl is torn between two suitors, a charming cowboy and a grim, brooding farmhand. Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical Western, starring Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones. ★★★

Early View

3.55 Doodlebugs
4.10 Home (2015) ★★
5.35 BBC News
5.50 Midlands Today; Weather

6.00 Countryfile
7.00 Mary, Mel and Sue's Big Christmas Thank You Mary Berry, Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins prepare a festive surprise for volunteers at a community centre that has been a focal point for a struggling South Wales town.

8.00 EastEnders Lauren and Abi make their feelings clear to Max, Karen confronts her children about the stolen phones and Mick tells Phil he wants nothing more to do with the job.

8.30 Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show The comedy star concludes his entertainment showcase with a festive special, featuring performances by soul singer Seal and comedian Bill Bailey.

9.35 Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee buys the perfect Christmas present for his children, but the kids' grandparents have the same idea, leaving him on a race against time to find an alternative.

10.15 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 The Vicar of Dibley The villagers celebrate Christmas, and vicar Geraldine learns there is a heavy price to be paid for festive kindness when she agrees to attend three slap-up lunches. (R)

11.15 The Two Ronnies Sketchbook (R)

11.45 Midnight Mass from Leeds Cathedral The traditional Christmas Eve service from St Anne's Roman Catholic Cathedral. Featuring the Leeds Cathedral Choir and Leeds Trinity Cathedral Boys' and Girls' Choirs.

1.00 FILM: Great Expectations (2012) ★★★

3.20 Guys and Dolls (1955) Musical, starring Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando. ★★

5.45 Carols from King's The annual service from King's College, Cambridge.

7.00 Dad's Army Mainwaring's men face the might of a rival platoon in a battle to prove their worth. Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier play the superannuated soldiers. (R)

8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2017 New series. Jeremy Paxman presents the first round, featuring famous alumni from Durham University and Keble College, Oxford, competing for a place in the semi-finals.

8.30 Winter's Weirdest Events Chris Packham explores unusual and unexplained natural events that occur around the world during winter, from tornadoes made of snow to penguins attempting death-defying feats.

9.30 The Great Gatsby (2013) Premiere. A naive writer befriends a decadent millionaire and slowly uncovers the dark underside of his lavish lifestyle. Period drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tobey Maguire. ★★

11.55 Christmas TOTP2 Special Mark Radcliffe presents festive performances from the Top of the Pops archive, including classics by Slade, Wham!, Wizzard, East 17, Mud, the Jackson 5 and Johnny Mathis. (R)

1.25 FILM: Whitney: Can I Be Me (2017) The life story of Whitney Houston, who died in 2012 aged 48. ★★ 3.05 Sign Zone: Holby City Morven is torn between her past and her future. Last in the series. (R) 4.05 This Is BBC Two Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two.

Prime Time

Late View

4.00 Cannonball Christmas Special Festive edition of the water-based obstacle course challenge, hosted by Andrew Flintoff.

5.00 You've Been Framed! Unwrapped Harry Hill narrates festive-themed clips. (R)

5.30 ITV News Central; Weather.

5.35 ITV News and Weather A Christmas Chase: Celebrity Special With Patti Clare, Matt Richardson, Kirsty Wark and Jimmy Osmond.

6.40 All Star Musicals Andrew Flintoff and Michael Crawford present a show in which seven famous faces each perform a song from a famous musical in front of a packed house at the London Palladium.

8.30 Maigret in Montmartre The detective investigates the seemingly random murders of a countess and a showgirl - and discovers an unexpected connection between the two victims' past experiences.

10.25 ITV News and Weather; Weather.

10.45 A Night for the Emergency Services Members of the emergency services team show off their performance skills, teaming up with the likes of Diversity, Leona Lewis, Michael Ball and Alfie Boe, and Tokio Myers. (R)

11.45 Christmas Carols on ITV Alfie Boe introduces a traditional Christmas Eve carol service, featuring Nadine Coyle, Alexander O'Neal, Howard Hewett, Alexis French, Ruthie Henshall and Natasha Barnes.

12.45 FILM: Casino Royale (1967) Spoof James Bond adventure, starring David Niven. ★ 3.00 ITV Nightscreen 5.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) 5.25 Make It Pop (R) 5.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R)

3.05 The Simpsons (R)
3.35 The Borrowers (1997) Children's fantasy, starring John Goodman. ★★

5.20 The Snowman Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R)

5.55 The Snowman and the Snowdog (R)

6.20 Channel 4 News
6.30 The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) Puppet comedy, starring Michael Caine. ★★

8.00 Child Genius vs Celebrities Christmas Special Richard Osman hosts a Christmas special in which past competitors return to take on a team of celebrities comprising Rob Delaney, Cathy Newman, Dom Joly and Janet Street-Porter.

9.00 Gogglebox 2017 Highlights from the most recent series, featuring the armchair critics' reactions to The Crystal Maze, the Weakest Link Celebrity Special, and Mary Berry's Country House Secrets.

11.05 The Inbetweeners The friends decide to play truant from sixth form and buy alcohol for an all-day drinking session, which is interrupted when Neil's father comes home early. (R)

11.35 The Inbetweeners The gang goes on the infamous sociology and geography field trip to Swanage, and Will takes a shine to new girl Lauren - but she is only interested in Simon. (R)

12.10 The Inbetweeners (R) 12.40 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.05 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.35 Man Down Christmas Special (R) 2.00 The Last Leg Christmas Special (R) 2.55 The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Special (R) 3.50 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) 4.40 Location, Location, Location (R) 5.35 Four in a Bed (R)

4.15 Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (1951) (b/w) ★★

6.00 Agatha Christie's Crooked House (R)

7.00 5 News Update The latest headlines, sport and weather.

7.05 Agatha Christie's Crooked House Adaptation of the mystery novel, starring Max Irons and Terence Stamp. A man returning to London from Cairo investigates the poisoning of his fiancée's grandfather. (R)

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas Peter Wright is called to an emergency at John Swales' farm, where one of his prize-winning Limousins is struggling to give birth. Last in the series.

9.00 André Rieu: My Life in Music Profile of the violinist, examining his upbringing in the Netherlands, early musical influences, and the bold moves that have made him one of classical music's biggest stars.

10.20 Andre Rieu: Christmas in London A festive concert by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring carols as well as songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez. (R)

11.30 An Audience with Donny & Marie The Osmond siblings entertain a celebrity audience in a programme based on their Las Vegas stage show, featuring old favourites and songs from their 2009 Donny & Marie album. (R)

12.35 Lip Sync Battle UK: Rufus Hound v Jorgie Porter (R) 1.00 SuperCasino 3.05 Love/Hate (R) 4.00 My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) 4.50 House Doctor (R) 5.15 Access 5.20 Wildlife SOS (R) 5.45 Chinese Food in Minutes (R)

Christmas Day

BBC 1



Jenny Agutter stars, Call the Midwife, on at 7.40pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 **CBeebies' The Snow Queen** Stage musical adaptation of the tale by Hans Christian Andersen. 9.45 **Go Jetties** 10.00 **Christmas Morning from All Saints Fulham** A live service led by the Rev Penny Seabrook. 11.00 **The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper** (R) 11.10 **Snow Chick: A Penguin's Tale** Following the first months in the life of an emperor penguin. (R) 12.10 **BBC News: Weather**. 12.20 **Top of the Pops Christmas Special** With performances by Ed Sheeran, Dua Lipa, Clean Bandit, Rita Ora and the Script. 1.20 **FILM: Toy Story 3** (2010) Animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. ★★

BBC 2



David Mitchell stars in the comedy, Upstart Crow, on at 8.25pm

6.10 **The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas** With the Rev Kate Bottley and Jon Culshaw. (R) 7.10 **Island Parish Shetland** (R) 7.40 **FILM: Bee Movie** (2007) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jerry Seinfeld. ★★ 9.00 **The Big Family Cooking Showdown** Families from Wiltshire and Birmingham compete. (R) 10.00 **Harry Potter: A History of Magic** (R) 11.00 **Carols from King's** The annual service from King's College, Cambridge. (R) 12.15 **FILM: The Importance of Being Earnest** (2002) Oscar Wilde comedy, starring Rupert Everett and Colin Firth. ★★ 1.40 **BBC Proms 2017: Oklahoma!** Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical Oklahoma! ★★

ITV



Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas, on at 7.00pm

6.00 **CITV: Sooty**. (R) 6.10 **Oddbods** (R) 6.15 **Om Om Stories** (R) 6.20 **Signed Stories: Share a Story** (R) 6.25 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 6.35 **Horrid Henry** (R) 6.50 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.05 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.20 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.30 **Scrambled! Scrambled!** Christmas Special 7.35 **Scrambled! The Tom and Jerry Show** (R) 7.50 **Scrambled! The Bagel and Becky Show** (R) 8.10 **Scrambled! Teen Titans Go!** (R) 8.30 **Scrambled! Be Cool, Scooby-Do!** (R) 9.05 **Scrambled! Wishart** (R) 9.25 **FILM: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation** (1989) ★★ 11.10 **FILM: Mr Bean's Holiday** (2007) ★★ 12.50 **FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie** (1985) ★★

CH4



The restaurant hosts a festive party, First Dates at Christmas, 9.00pm

6.00 **FILM: Rugrats Go Wild** (2003) ★★ 7.20 **The Bear** (R) 7.45 **Prep & Landing: Naughty vs Nice** (R) 8.10 **Prep & Landing** (R) 8.40 **Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas** (R) 9.05 **The Simpsons** (R) 9.35 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.05 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.35 **The Simpsons** (R) 11.05 **FILM: Dr Seuss' The Lorax** (2012) ★★ 12.45 **The Snowman** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 1.20 **The Snowman and the Snowdog** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R) 1.55 **Father Christmas** (R) 2.25 **Channel 4 News** 2.30 **The Alternative Christmas Message** 2.35 **FILM: Scrooged** (1988) Christmas comedy, starring Bill Murray. ★★

CH5



Britain's Best Loved Double Acts: Christmas Special, on at 10.55pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 8.55 **FILM: Scrooge** (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. ★★ 11.05 **FILM: Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** (1954) A cowboy decides to get married, prompting his six hellraising brothers to kidnap brides for themselves. Stanley Donen's musical Western, starring Howard Keel and Jane Powell. ★★ 1.05 **FILM: Singin' in the Rain** (1952) A silent-movie star tries to win the heart of an aspiring actress as the dawn of sound changes the film business for ever. Musical comedy, starring Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds. ★★

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.00 **The Queen's Christmas Broadcast** 3.10 **Cinderella** (2015) ★★

4.45 **The Highway Rat** 5.15 **BBC News: Weather**. 5.30 **Doctor Who** 6.30 **Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special**

7.40 **Call the Midwife** Boxing Day sees heavy snowfall covering the country and the adverse weather causes major disruption across Poplar as roads become blocked and pipes freeze.

9.00 **EastEnders** Things are set to explode for Max as Stacey's phone - with all Jane's incriminating voicemails - is returned to her. Mick discovers the hard way not to cross Aidan Maguire.

10.00 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** First of two festive specials. Grandad is convinced the house is haunted, Cathy has an internet date and Rory hopes to improve his looks by undergoing plastic surgery.

10.35 **30 Years of French & Saunders** Comedy double act Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders mark the 30th anniversary of their eponymous sketch show, which ran for six series up until 2007.

11.25 **BBC News: Weather**.

11.40 **On Christmas Night** Colin Salmon reads Luke's account of the angels appearing to shepherds in the fields above Bethlehem to proclaim the joyful news of the birth of Christ.

11.45 **Have I Got a Bit More** 2017 **News for You** An extended compilation of memorable moments from the satirical quiz over the past year, with a variety of guest hosts and panellists joining captains Paul Merton and Ian Hislop.

12.30 **Darcey Bussell: Looking for Fred Astaire** (R) 1.30 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 1.35 **BBC News**

4.30 **Dame Vera Lynn: Happy 100th Birthday** (R) 5.30 **Sign Zone: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast** (R) 5.35 **The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show** (R) 6.45 **Winter's Weirdest Events** (R) 7.45 **Dad's Army** Frazer is unable to hide his delight when Captain Mainwaring's disreputable brother gatecrashes a sherry party for local dignitaries. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R) 8.25 **Upstart Crow** Will's new play is to be performed at the queen's Christmas festivities, while the Shakespeares find themselves with some uninvited guests. Emma Thompson guest stars as Elizabeth I. 9.00 **Tom Jones & Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas** Tom Jones and Beverley Knight host a festive concert from Cardiff featuring a blend of traditional gospel, carols and songs of spiritual intent by greats like Prince and Bob Dylan. First shown on BBC One Wales. 10.00 **Judi Dench: All the World's Her Stage** Billy Connolly, Samantha Bond, Daniel Craig and Ian McKellen are among those reminiscing about the veteran actress in this celebration of her 60-year career. (R) 11.05 **Mrs Henderson Presents** (2005) A widow invests her fortune in an abandoned London theatre and defies censorship laws to stage a controversial nude revue. Fact-based comedy drama, with Judi Dench. ★★ 12.45 **FILM: My Week with Marilyn** (2011) ★★ 2.15 **This Is BBC Two**

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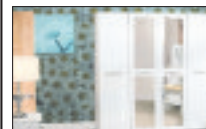
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Boxing Day

BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV	Ch4	Ch5
 <p>Documentary following polar bears, Snow Bears, on at 6.30pm</p> <p>6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 FILM: Tinker Bell and the Legend of the NeverBeast (2014) ★★★ 10.10 FILM: Planes: Fire & Rescue (2014) Premiere. Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Dane Cook. ★★★ 11.25 Mary, Mel and Sue's Big Christmas Thank You (R) 12.25 BBC News; Weather. 12.35 Midlands Today; Weather 12.45 Judi Dench: My Passion for Trees The actress discovers how trees are a part of Britain's history. (R) 1.45 Stick Man Animated adaptation of Julia Donaldson's children's book. (R) 2.10 FILM: Shaun the Sheep Movie (2015) Premiere. Animation, featuring the voice of Justin Fletcher. ★★★</p>	 <p>New series, Two Doors Down - Christmas Special, on at 10.30pm</p> <p>6.15 Sign Zone: Celebrity Antiques Road Trip Strictly Come Dancing 2016 champions Ore Oduba and Joanne Clifton compete. (R) 7.15 Island Parish Shetland (R) 7.45 FILM: Chimpanzee (2012) Premiere. Documentary following an orphaned chimpanzee. ★★★ 8.55 The Big Family Cooking Showdown (R) 9.55 Nadiya's British Food Adventure (R) 10.25 Nadiya's British Food Adventure (R) 10.55 The Sweet Makers: A Tudor Treat (R) 11.55 FILM: A Hard Day's Night (1964) Musical comedy, starring the Beatles. (b/w) ★★★ 1.20 FILM: The Eagle Has Landed (1976) Second World War spy adventure, with Michael Caine. ★★★</p>	 <p>Festive edition, Birds of a Feather Christmas Special, 10.15pm</p> <p>6.00 CITV: Sooty. (R) 6.10 Oddbods (R) 6.15 Om Nom Stories (R) 6.20 Signed Stories: Share a Story (R) 6.25 Almost Naked Animals (R) 6.35 Nerds & Monsters (R) 6.50 Nerds & Monsters (R) 7.05 Horrid Henry (R) 7.20 Wishfart (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! Christmas Special 7.35 Scrambled! The Tom and Jerry Show (R) 7.50 Scrambled! The Bagel and Becky Show (R) 8.10 Scrambled! The Powerpuff Girls (R) 8.30 FILM: Scrambled!: Scooby-Doo! Haunted Holidays (2012) ★★★ 9.05 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry (R) 9.25 FILM: Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) ★★★ 11.25 FILM: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) ★ 1.00 ITV Racing: Live from Kempton</p>	 <p>The family recalls stories about disasters at sea, The Simpsons, 10.25am</p> <p>6.40 FILM: Song of the Sea (2014) Animated fantasy, with the voice of Lucy O'Connell. ★★★ 8.25 FILM: Short Circuit (1986) Sci-fi comedy adventure, starring Steve Guttenberg. ★★★ 10.25 The Simpsons The family recalls stories about disasters at sea. (R) 10.50 The Simpsons A department store Santa grants Lisa's Christmas wish. (R) 11.15 The Simpsons (R) 11.40 The Simpsons Marge loses all memory of Homer. (R) 12.10 FILM: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) Comedy, starring Zachary Levi. ★★ 1.55 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather. 2.00 Child Genius vs Celebrities Christmas Special Past competitors return to take on a team of celebrities. (R)</p>	 <p>The Strictly Story: Fake Tan, Tangos & a 10 from Len, on at 7.00pm</p> <p>6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 Access 9.25 Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud Clips of four-mouthed parrots and a water-skiing squirrel. (R) 10.00 FILM: Titanic (1953) An aristocrat trying to stop his wife and children leaving him finds them on board the ill-fated ship. Drama, with Clifton Webb and Barbara Stanwyck. (b/w) ★★★ 11.50 FILM: Chariots of Fire (1981) Oscar-winning drama based on the true story of British runners Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, going for gold at the 1924 Olympics in Paris. ★★★ 2.10 Balmoral: A Hidden History Documentary offering a behind-scenes look at the secluded royal retreat that covers 50,000 acres of the Scottish Highlands, and is Queen Elizabeth's favourite home. (R)</p>
<p>3.30 Doodlebugs Sketch show in which inanimate objects talk.</p> <p>3.45 Mary Poppins (1964) Disney musical fantasy, with Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. ★★★</p> <p>6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather</p> <p>6.20 Midlands Today; Weather</p> <p>6.30 Snow Bears Documentary following polar bears and their cubs as they travel 400 miles to reach the North Pole as springsets in, encountering other Arctic wildlife along the way.</p> <p>7.30 EastEnders Life for the Brannings will never be the same again as the horror of what has happened unfolds - but it soon becomes clear Max's actions have even wider repercussions.</p> <p>8.00 Little Women New series. Heidi Thomas's adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's 19th-century American coming-of-age tale begins as the four March sisters contemplate a Christmas without their father.</p> <p>9.00 The Miniaturist Two-part adaptation of Jessie Burton's best-selling novel set in 1686, following 18-year-old Nella Oortman as she begins a new life in Amsterdam as the wife of a wealthy merchant.</p> <p>10.30 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update</p> <p>10.45 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Bournemouth v West Ham United, Huddersfield Town v Stoke City, and West Bromwich Albion v Everton.</p> <p>12.15 Stacey Dooley in the USA (R) 1.15 Weather for the Week Ahead 1.20 BBC News</p>	<p>3.30 The Repair Shop at Christmas (R)</p> <p>4.30 Final Score</p> <p>5.35 Matthew Bourne's Cinderella</p> <p>7.30 Christmas University Challenge 2017 Selwyn College, Cambridge, featuring writer Robin French, take on St Andrews University, with BBC Scotland Political Editor Brian Taylor hoping for victory. Jeremy Paxman hosts.</p> <p>8.00 Reindeer Family & Me Gordon Buchanan goes to live with a family from the nomadic Sami culture in Finnish Lapland, and undertakes a journey across the frozen wilderness with the help of a reindeer.</p> <p>9.00 Dragons' Den A serial entrepreneur pitches his online greeting card business, and a Surrey-based inventor hopes his word game could become a family Christmas favourite.</p> <p>10.00 Q! Sandi Toksvig hosts the festive edition with Jason Manford, Romesh Ranganathan, Holly Walsh and Alan Davies answering the questions.</p> <p>10.30 Two Doors Down - Christmas Special New series. Beth and Eric's plans for a quiet festive feast are thwarted when Cathy and Colin's flight to the French Alps is cancelled, and Christine also turns up with her granddaughter.</p> <p>11.00 Joanna & Jennifer: Absolutely Champs Absolutely Fabulous duo Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders explore the Champagne region of north eastern France to find out how their characters' favourite tipples is made. (R)</p> <p>12.00 Saturday Night Fever - The Ultimate Disco Movie (R) 1.10 Tom Jones & Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas (R)</p>	<p>3.30 E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial (1982) Sci-fi fantasy, with Henry Thomas. ★★★</p> <p>5.50 ITV News and Weather</p> <p>6.10 Emmerdale Diane comforts Robert as he crumbles after reading a thank you card for Seb's presents, and watching from the shadows, Rebecca is struck by his emotion.</p> <p>6.40 Jurassic World (2015) Premiere. A safari park for genetically engineered dinosaurs creates a new species - but it quickly escapes to terrorise the tourists. Action adventure sequel, with Chris Pratt. ★★</p> <p>9.00 Coronation Street Eileen keeps vigil over a comatose Billy while worrying about a missing Todd. Daniel finds Adam semi-conscious, and Carla begs Roy not to reveal her secret.</p> <p>10.00 ITV News and Weather</p> <p>10.15 Birds of a Feather Christmas Special Tracey's plans could upset the festive harmony. Sharon finds a novel way of doing her Christmas shopping and Dorian has a mystery to solve. Comedy, starring Pauline Quirke. (R)</p> <p>11.15 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness enlist the aid of Will Mellor, Robbie Williams, Sarah Parish, Emma Willis and Chris Kamara and others as they remake the 1984 classic Ghostbusters. (R)</p> <p>11.45 Al Murray's Make Christmas Great Again Philosopher, common sense commando, scholar, sage and bald bloke The Pub Landlord arranges a lock-in with a celebrity guest audience for a lively mix of music and chat. (R)</p> <p>12.45 Jackpot247 3.00 Tenable (R)</p> <p>3.50 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)</p>	<p>3.05 The Great Christmas Bake Off Part one of two. Former contestants compete in a series of festive challenges. (R)</p> <p>4.20 The Little Mermaid (1989) Animated adventure, with the voice of Jodi Benson. ★★★</p> <p>6.00 Back to the Future (1985) A teenager travels back in time and gets stuck in the 1950s - where he has to make sure his parents fall in love. Sci-fi comedy adventure, with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. ★★★</p> <p>8.00 Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong Richard Ayoade is joined by actor Jon Hamm, star of Mad Men and Baby Driver, for a Yuletide trek around Hong Kong - the most visited and most vertical city on the planet.</p> <p>9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2017 Jimmy Carr hosts a comedy quiz looking back at the past 12 months, with panellists Richard Ayoade, Noel Fielding, David Mitchell, Big Narstie, Roisin Conaty and Katherine Ryan.</p> <p>11.10 Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994) A man's misfortunes in love look set to change when he meets an American beauty at a wedding. Richard Curtis's romantic comedy, starring Hugh Grant, Andie MacDowell and John Hannah. ★★★</p> <p>1.20 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.50 The Inbetweeners (R) 2.15 The Inbetweeners (R) 2.45 The Inbetweeners (R) 3.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) 4.00 Location, Location, Location (R) 4.55 Kirstie's Handmade Christmas (R) 5.10 FILM: Moshi Monsters: The Movie (2013) Animated adventure, with the voice of Emma Tate. ★★</p>	<p>4.10 Sandringham: The Queen At Christmas What Christmas is like for the Royal Family on the Sandringham Estate.</p> <p>5.15 A Royal Night Out (2015) Premiere. Comedy drama, starring Bel Powley and Sarah Gadon. ★★</p> <p>7.00 The Strictly Story: Fake Tan, Tangos & a 10 from Len The tale behind the popular celebrity dance contest, featuring contributions from popular past contestants as well as the show's judges and professional dancers and celebrity fans. (R)</p> <p>8.30 Dirty Dancing: Making Movie Magic A 30th anniversary celebration of the movie phenomenon, revisiting favourite scenes, discovering what happened on set and hearing from the supporting cast and crew. (R)</p> <p>10.00 Dirty Dancing (1987) A dance instructor at a 1960s resort teaches a naive teenager about self-expression as they perform in an important show. Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. ★★</p> <p>12.00 Football on 5: The Championship Colin Murray introduces action from the Boxing Day games. 12.55 Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights Highlights from the 11th round of matches. 1.45 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 Love/Hate John Boy's deceit sparks a gang war. (R) 4.00 Now That's Funny! Internet-sourced videos with an amusing family friendly hook. (R) 4.45 House Doctor Highlights of the series. (R) 5.10 House Busters A south London home. (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)</p>

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

BBC 1



Anya Taylor-Joy stars in The Miniaturist, on at 9.00pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 7.45 Match of the Day Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches. (R) 9.15 FILM: **Turbo** (2013) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ryan Reynolds. ★★ 10.45 FILM: **The Princess and the Frog** (2009) ★★ 12.15 **Snow Bears** Documentary following polar bears travelling to the North Pole. (R) 1.15 **BBC News** The latest national and international stories. 1.25 **Midlands Today; Weather** 1.35 **Father Brown** Sid falls for the heiress to a local brewery. (R) 2.20 FILM: **Shrek 2** (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. ★★

BBC 2



Documentary about the early years, Oasis: Supersonic, 10.00pm

6.25 **Sign Zone: Mary Berry's Country House Secrets** Mary visits the March family at Goodwood House. (R) 7.25 **Island Parish Shetland** (R) 7.55 FILM: **Bears** (2014) Premiere. Documentary following a family of bears in Alaska. ★★ 9.10 **The Big Family Cooking Showdown** (R) 10.10 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 10.40 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 11.10 **The Sweet Makers: A Georgian Treat** (R) 12.10 FILM: **The Red Shoes** (1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama, starring Moira Shearer. ★★ 2.20 **The World's Most Extraordinary Homes** Unusual homes built in mountainous regions of the world. (R)

ITV



Neil Dudgeon stars, Midsomer Murders, 1.00pm

6.00 CITV: **Sooty**. (R) 6.10 **The Oddbods Show** (R) 6.15 **Om Nom Stories** (R) 6.20 **Super 4** (R) 6.35 **Super 4** (R) 6.45 **Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) 7.00 **Mr Bean: The Animated Series** (R) 7.10 **Horrid Henry** (R) 7.25 FILM: **K-9** (1989) Police comedy, starring James Belushi. ★★ 9.25 FILM: **Twins** (1988) Comedy, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. ★★ 11.25 **Cannonball Christmas Special** (R) 12.25 **You've Been Framed!** Judy Murray toughens up Andy by using him for target practice. 12.55 **ITV Lunchtime News; Weather**. 12.58 **Central News and Weather**. 1.00 **Midsomer Murders** A man is stabbed to death during a ghost-hunting party. (R)

Ch4



Professor Noel treats a poorly penguin, The Supervet, on at 7.00pm

6.40 FILM: **Short Circuit 2** (1988) A curious robot meets an old friend and sets off for an adventure in New York. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Fisher Stevens, with the voice of Tim Blaney. ★★ 8.40 **Lego Masters** The hunt is on for the UK and Ireland's best Lego builders. (R) 9.40 **The Simpsons** With the voice of Frances McDormand. (R) 10.10 **The Simpsons** Groundskeeper Willie is forced to move in with the family. (R) 10.35 **The Simpsons** Grampa becomes a matador. (R) 11.05 FILM: **Small Soldiers** (1998) A computer chip brings a squad of toy soldiers to life, causing mayhem for their owner. Children's adventure, with Kirsten Dunst. ★★ 1.15 FILM: **Sunshine on Leith** (2013) Musical, starring George MacKay. ★★

Ch5



Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2017, on at 9.00pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 9.15 **Cruising with Jane McDonald** The presenter embarks on a series of ocean odysseys. (R) 9.30 **World's Strongest Man 2017** Highlights of the World Tour Finals. 10.30 FILM: **North Sea Hijack** (1979) Thriller, starring Roger Moore. ★★ 12.25 FILM: **Operation Crossbow** (1965) Three engineers parachute into occupied Holland to destroy a missile base – but there is a traitor in their midst. Second World War adventure, with George Peppard and Sophia Loren. ★★ 2.40 FILM: **Operation: Daybreak** (1975) Fact-based Second World War drama about the killing of leading Nazi Reinhard Heydrich and the search for the assassins. Starring Timothy Bottoms. ★★

3.45 **The Gruffalo** (R) 4.10 **Big Hero 6** (2014) ★★

5.45 **Pointless** (R) 6.30 **BBC News** 6.50 **Midlands Today; Weather**

7.00 **Celebrity Mastermind** New series. John Humphrys presents the first in a new series of the classic quiz show, as Jack Ashton, Rich Hall, Guy Mowbray and Pam Ayres face the famous black chair.

7.30 **A Question of Sport: Premier League Special** Sue Barker asks the questions in the light-hearted quiz, with Dion Dublin, Graeme Le Saux, Darren Bent and Alex Scott joining team captains Matt Dawson and Phil Tufnell.

8.00 **Little Women** The March sisters must fend for themselves at home as Marmee is preoccupied with caring for her ailing husband, but the girls face an insurmountable challenge as Beth falls ill.

9.00 **The Miniaturist** Two-part adaptation of Jessie Burton's best-selling novel set in 1686. In the second episode, Nella desperately tries to turn the fortunes of the Brandt household around.

10.00 **BBC News at Ten** 10.20 **Midlands Today; Weather**; National Lottery Update

10.30 **Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special** (R)

11.00 **Not Going Out Christmas Special** (R)

11.40 **Comic Relief 2017: 'Twas the Thanks After Red Nose Day** A compilation looking back at some of the highlights from the 2017 Comic Relief fundraising event, featuring a host of celebrities appearances and comedic routines.

12.40 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 12.45 **BBC News**

3.20 **Inside the Factory** (R) 4.20 **The Man Who Never Was** (1956) ★★

6.00 **Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise** (R) 7.00 **Dad's Army** Mainwaring finds himself bidding against Pike for an orange at a fundraising bazaar, but the private reveals a stubborn streak that costs the captain dear. (R)

7.30 **Christmas University Challenge 2017** In the third match of the Christmas series, teams of university alumni from the University of York and University of Southampton compete.

8.00 **Six Robots & Us** A unique experiment exploring the latest innovations in robotics, to examine how useful robots can be in enhancing the lives of ordinary families.

9.00 **Alan Partridge: Why, When, Where, How and Whom?** Documentary celebrating 25 years of Steve Coogan's comic creation, featuring contributions from writers and co-stars and previously unseen rehearsal and improv footage.

10.00 **Oasis: Supersonic** (2016) Premiere. Documentary about the early years of the Manchester band, featuring concert footage and first-hand accounts of the sibling rivalry between Noel and Liam Gallagher. ★★

11.55 **NFL This Week** Action from the 16th round of fixtures, which included Green Bay Packers v Minnesota Vikings, New Orleans Saints v Atlanta Falcons, and Philadelphia Eagles v Oakland Raiders.

12.45 **Britpop at the BBC** 1.45 **Blur at Glastonbury** (R) 2.45 **Sign Zone: Joanna & Jennifer: Absolutely Changers** (R) 3.45 FILM: **Sign Zone: Bill** (2015) ★★

3.00 **Tenable** A team of five from Cornwall answers questions about top 10 lists. (R)

4.00 **Tipping Point** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R)

5.00 **The Chase** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)

6.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs** The comedian returns to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home in London, meeting a British bulldog with a leg problem and helping to wash a smelly English mastiff. (R)

6.30 **ITV News Central**; Weather.

6.45 **ITV Evening News**; Weather.

7.00 **Emmerdale** Zak enlists Faith's help in faking the paperwork to save the Dingle home, while Liv is delighted to see that Aaron and Alex are together.

7.30 **Coronation Street** Eileen tries to find out more about Billy's fall, Adam vows to get justice for his mum's death, and Alya discovers why new clients do not want to meet with her.

8.00 **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** (2005) The teenage wizard is chosen to represent Hogwarts School in a dangerous magical tournament. Fourth instalment of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Robert Pattinson. ★★

10.50 **ITV Evening News**; Weather.

11.04 **ITV Central Weather** 11.05 **Tina & Bobby** Drama about footballer Bobby Moore's life with his childhood sweetheart Tina Dean, from their humble beginnings to superstardom. (R)

12.05 **Get Shirley** (R) 12.55 **Jackpot247** 3.00 **The Best House Win** (R)

3.10 **Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny** Channel 4 News

4.15 **Back to the Future Part II** (1989) ★★

6.30 **Hollyoaks** 7.00 **The Supervet at Christmas** Noel Fitzpatrick is called upon to help a Humboldt penguin chick that needs surgery on its foot. He also treats a cat with a mysterious swelling and a husky has a hip operation. (R)

8.00 **Supershoppers Sales Special** Anna Richardson and Sabrina Grant offer money-saving tips, and investigate some of the slashed prices and discounts from retailers that may not be all they seem.

9.00 **Miranda Does Christmas** A Christmas special hosted by comedian Miranda Hart, featuring a unique gospel choir performance, and a festive version of a Destiny's Child classic.

10.00 **First Dates at Christmas** The restaurant hosts a festive party as maitre d' Fred and his Christmas Cupids celebrate a year that has seen proposals, engagement rings and the show's very first baby. (R)

11.05 **East is East** (1999) Two Asian teenagers in 1970s Salford are horrified when their traditionally minded father plans arranged marriages for them. Comedy drama, starring Om Puri and Jimi Mistry. ★★

12.50 **Very British Problems at Christmas** (R) 1.45 **That's So Last Century** (R) 2.35 **Britain's Favourite Superhero** (R) 4.00 **Location, Location, Location** (R) 4.55 **Four in a Bed** (R) 5.20 **Kirstie's Handmade Christmas** (R) 5.40 FILM: **Holiday Inn** (1942) (b/w) ★★

4.55 **The Guns of Navarone** (1961) Second World War adventure, starring Gregory Peck; ★★ 5 News Update

4.55 **The Guns of Navarone** (1961) Second World War adventure, starring Gregory Peck; ★★ 5 News Update

8.00 **World's Strongest Man 2017** Action from the opening heat in Botswana, which featured four former winners including defending champion Brian Shaw – targeting a record-equalling fifth title; 5 News Update

9.00 **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2017** Memorable moments featuring famous faces from the past year, including David Beckham's leaked e-mails, a mishap at the Oscars, and Prue Leith's Great British Bake Off spoilers.

12.00 **Blind Date Christmas Special** A festive edition of the matchmaking show, in which Paul O'Grady gives a real-life Prince Charming a chance to find romance with either Cinderella, Snow White or Tinkerbell. (R) 1.00 **SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 **Love/Hate** Trish gives birth on Christmas Eve, while Darren is delighted when Rosie returns to Dublin. However, John Boy is still at war with Fran – and orders Tommy to kill his rival. (R) 4.00 **Cruising with Jane McDonald** The singer embarks on a series of ocean odysseys, beginning with a stop-off at Nassau in the Bahamas, where Jane finds solace in the state's oldest baptist church. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** Ann Maurice and Alistair Appleton present more highlights from the series, recalling a basement flat in north London desperately in need of tidying up. (R) 5.10 **House Busters** (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** The team treats an owl that refuses to fly and a badger with life-threatening injuries, while Simon tries to free a deer that has become stuck in railings. (R)

4.55 **The Guns of Navarone** (1961) Second World War adventure, starring Gregory Peck; ★★ 5 News Update

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Thursday, December 28

Early View



Granville faces being left alone at Christmas, Still Open All Hours, 7.30pm

6.00 Breakfast A round-up of national and international news, plus current affairs, arts and entertainment, and weather. **9.00 FILM: The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!** (2012) Animated comedy, with the voice of Hugh Grant. **★ ★ ★ 10.20 FILM: Kung Fu Panda** (2008) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jack Black. **★ ★ ★ 11.45 Bargain Hunt** Two teams test their antiques knowledge. (R) **12.45 BBC News at One; Weather** 1.00 Midlands Today; Weather 1.05 Father Brown The clerical sleuth encounters a voodoo priest. (R) **1.50 Revolting Rhymes** Part one of two. (R) **2.20 FILM: Shrek the Third** (2007) Animated sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers. **★ ★ ★**



Steve Coogan stars, Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa, on at 11.30pm

6.45 Sign Zone: MasterChef: The Professionals (R) **7.45 FILM: Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan** (2011) A tribute to the visual effects artist. **★ ★ ★ 9.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown** (R) **10.15 Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) **10.45 Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) **11.15 The Sweet Makers: A Victorian Treat** (R) **12.15 FILM: Love Is a Many Splendored Thing** (1955) Fact-based romantic drama, with William Holden and Jennifer Jones. **★ ★ 1.55 Supercharged Otters: Natural World** Documentary following three orphaned river otters. (R) **2.55 The World's Most Extraordinary Homes** Unusual homes in forest regions around the world. (R)



Bradley Walsh hosts the quiz show, The Chase, on at 5.00pm

6.00 Good Morning Britain Shaun Williamson gives the lowdown on his appearance in Peter Pan, and Chris Packham, talks about his dinosaur documentary The Real T. Rex. **8.30 Lorraine** **9.25 FILM: Babe** (1995) A piglet dreams of being a champion sheepdog but several greedy humans are determined to see him end up on a dinner plate. Family comedy, with James Cromwell. **★ ★ ★ ★ 11.05 FILM: Black Beauty** (1994) Family drama, starring Sean Bean. **★ ★ ★ 12.45 ITV Lunchtime News** **12.55 ITV News Central 1.00 Midsomer Murders** As Midsomer St Claire prepares for storms and flooding, it appears a murderer is using ancient torture methods to punish modern-day "sinners". (R)



Joel confides in Sienna about his feelings, Hollyoaks, on at 6.30pm

7.20 FILM: The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004) Children's animated comedy, with the voice of Tom Kenny. **★ ★ ★ 8.55 Lego Masters** The teams compete in two challenges on the theme of movement. (R) **10.00 The Simpsons** Marge joins the local police academy. (R) **10.30 The Simpsons** Homer gets a new wife. With the voice of Ricky Gervais. (R) **11.00 FILM: Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World** (2011) Two children learn their stepmother is a secret agent and help her battle an evil genius with the power to control time. Family adventure, starring Jessica Alba and Jeremy Piven. **★ ★ 12.45 FILM: The Net** (1995) Thriller, with Sandra Bullock and Jeremy Northam. **★ ★**



Action from the second heat, World's Strongest Man 2017, on at 8.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.15 Cruising with Jane McDonald Highlights of Jane's tour of Alaska, America's largest state. (R) **9.30 The Gadget Show** (R) **10.25 FILM: The 7th Voyage of Sinbad** (1958) Fantasy adventure, with Kerwin Mathews. **★ ★ ★ 12.15 FILM: The Vikings** (1958) A Norse warrior fights to claim the Northumbrian throne, unaware his rival for the crown is really his half-brother. Adventure, with Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. **★ ★ ★ ★ 2.30 FILM: Jason and the Argonauts** (1963) The son of an overthrown king battles monsters during an epic voyage in search of a magical golden fleece. Fantasy adventure, with Todd Armstrong and Honor Blackman. **★ ★ ★**

Prime Time

3.45 The Gruffalo's Child (R) **4.10 How to Train Your Dragon 2** (2014) **★ ★ ★** **5.45 Pointless** (R) **6.30 BBC News** **6.45 Midlands Today; Weather** **7.00 Celebrity Mastermind** Antiques expert Philip Serrell, comedian and actor Richard McCourt, poet and presenter Lemn Sissay and Sports anchor Olivia Wayne compete. **7.30 Still Open All Hours** New series. Granville faces being left alone at Christmas as all his friends and neighbours make plans to go away - leaving him at the amorous mercy of Mrs Featherstone. **8.00 EastEnders** Fi breaks into Willmott-Brown's office to find out the truth about her father, while he tries to manipulate Kathy. Karen reaches out to her sister for financial help. **8.30 Little Women** Jo feels snubbed when Amy is chosen over her to accompany Aunt Carroll's daughter on a tour of Europe, so she flees to New York to pursue her career. Last in the series. **9.30 EastEnders** Fi is sickened to discover how low her family have sunk, Linda is hell-bent on finding another local pub to manage and Bernadette tells Kandice about the family's money troubles. **10.00 BBC News** **10.15 Midlands Today** **10.25 Bruno Mars: Live in Harlem** **11.10 U2 at the BBC** The band performs some of their biggest hits at Abbey Road Studios, alongside tracks from their latest album, Songs of Experience, and chat to Cat Deeley about their lives. (R) **12.25 Weather for the Week Ahead** **12.30 BBC News**

3.55 Inside the Factory (R) **4.55 The Heroes of Telemark** (1965) **★ ★ ★** **7.00 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise** Exploring the forests, plains and cities of Central Thailand, and revealing how the nation's people find spiritual fulfilment in their relationships with animals. (R) **8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2017** Teams from the University of Leicester and UCL compete, with Paralympian Danielle Brown, Sky at Night presenter Pete Lawrence and the BBC's Jeremy Bowen among the contestants. **8.30 Six Robots & Us** Part two of two. The experts deliver more robots to families around the UK, including a north London couple who receive a machine designed to help their autistic four-year-old. **9.30 Attenborough and the Empire of the Ants** David Attenborough tells the story of two physically identical species of ant that have two very different strategies to survive the harsh environment of the Swiss Alps. **10.30 Romesh Ranganathan: Irrational Live** The comedian's first-ever live stand-up show, in which the Bafta-nominated star takes shots at everyone from his children to a stranger in a coffee shop. **11.30 Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa** (2013) The hapless local radio DJ ends up in the middle of a siege when a colleague responds to being fired by taking hostages. Comedy, starring Steve Coogan. **★ ★ ★** **12.55 FILM: Oasis: Supersonic** (2016) **★ ★ ★ 2.55 Sign Zone: Employable Me** (R)

3.00 Tenable Quiz, hosted by Warwick Davis. (R) **4.00 Tipping Point** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R) **5.00 The Chase** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R) **6.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs** The comedian tries to train three huge puppies that spent the first five months of their lives being raised by a homeless man, and sets out to reunite a Jack Russell with its owner. (R) **6.30 ITV News Central; Weather.** **6.45 ITV Evening News; Weather.** **7.00 Emmerdale** Rebecca confesses her plans, Jimmy and Nicola receive a tempting offer, and Bernice prepares for her date. **8.00 Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** (2007) The wizard forms his fellow pupils into a secret army to battle the resurrected Lord Voldemort. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Gary Oldman. **★ ★ ★** **10.35 ITV News; Weather.** **10.51 ITV Central Weather** **10.55 Tina & Bobby** The West Ham player leads England to World Cup glory at Wembley and fame and fortune follow, as the couple become icons of their time. Lorne MacFadyen and Michelle Keegan star. (R) **11.55 Stuck on You: The Football Sticker Story** How four Italian brothers took a childhood obsession and turned it into a worldwide industry - and the British upstarts who took on the mighty Panini to beat them at their own game. (R) **12.45 Jackpot247 3.00 Tenable** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen**

3.00 Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny **4.00 Channel 4 News** **4.20 Back to the Future Part III** (1990) **★ ★ ★** **6.30 Hollyoaks** **7.00 We're Going on a Bear Hunt** Animated adventure based on Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury's popular children's story, featuring the voices of Olivia Colman, Pam Ferris and Mark Williams. (R) **7.30 The Secret Life of the Zoo at Christmas** Chester Zoo's keepers are busy making gifts for all the animals, and it is a chaotic free-for-all when the festive parcels are handed over to the chimps. (R) **8.30 The Secret Life of 5 Year Olds on Holiday** One-off special in which familiar faces from the observational series are shown away from the classroom as they and their families jet off to the Sunwing resort in Cyprus. **9.00 What Britain Bought in 2017** Mary Portas surveys Britain's spending habits over the past 12 months, and looks back at some of the retail stories, such as the popularity of Prosecco and the fidget spinner. **10.00 The Undateables at Christmas** Familiar faces from the dating show share their extra special plans for the festive season, with Daniel from Brighton busy planning the release of his latest single. (R) **11.05 About a Boy** (2002) A womaniser who poses as a father to meet single women changes his ways after befriending a lonely youngster. Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Toni Collette and Nicholas Hoult. **★ ★ ★** **12.55 Alan Carr's Christmas Chatty Man** (R) **2.50 Paul O'Grady's 100 Years of Movie Musicals** (R)

4.30 André Rieu: My Life in Music Profile of the Dutch violinist. (R) **6.00 Andre Rieu: Christmas in London** A festive concert by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring carols as well as songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez. (R) **7.00 Winter in Alaska** Documentary following four seasons in the north American state, beginning with winter, where snowfall is measured in feet rather than inches; (R) **5 News Update** **8.00 World's Strongest Man 2017** Action from the second heat in Botswana, which featured Iceland's Hafthor Julius Bjornsson, a man who has stood on the podium five times but has never been crowned champion; **5 News Tonight** **9.00 Flight** (2012) Premiere. A pilot is hailed as a hero for bringing a malfunctioning plane down safely - until it emerges he was drunk at the controls. Drama, with Denzel Washington and Don Cheadle. **★ ★ ★** **11.45 The Taking of Pelham 123** (2009) Criminals hijack a crowded New York subway train and threaten to kill the passengers unless they are paid \$10million. Thriller remake, with Denzel Washington and John Travolta. **★ ★ ★** **1.45 SuperCasino** Live interactive gaming. **3.05 Love/Hate** The gang members' lives spiral out of control. (R) **4.00 Cruising with Jane McDonald** A Lilliputian lout round the Inner Hebrides puts Jane in touch with her Scottish roots. (R) **4.45 House Doctor** A slightly neglected 200-year-old cottage. (R) **5.10 House Busters** (R) **5.35 Wildlife SOS** (R)

Late View

BBC 1



Rob Brydon hosts the comedy panel show, Would I Lie to You? 8.30pm

6.00 Breakfast News, entertainment and weather reports. 9.00 FILM: **Monsters vs Aliens** (2009) Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. ★★ 10.25 **Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas** (R) 10.55 FILM: **Kung Fu Panda 2** (2011) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Jack Black. ★★ 12.15 **Bargain Hunt** From Built Wells, Powys. (R) 12.45 **BBC News at One**; Weather 1.00 **Midlands Today**; Weather 1.10 **Father Brown** The priest investigates the murder of a B-movie director. (R) 1.55 **Revolting Rhymes** The second of two animations based on Roald Dahl's children's book. (R) 2.25 FILM: **Up** (2009) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ed Asner. ★★

BBC 2



Frankie Boyle's 2017 New Year World Order, on at 10.00pm

6.35 **Sign Zone: MasterChef: The Professionals** Challenges include making a fruit-based dessert. (R) 7.35 FILM: **G-Force** (2009) Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy. ★★ 8.55 **The Big Family Cooking Showdown** (R) 9.55 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 10.25 **Nadiya's British Food Adventure** (R) 10.55 **Puerto Rico - Island of Enchantment: Natural World** (R) 11.55 FILM: **Three Coins in the Fountain** (1954) Romantic drama, starring Dorothy McGuire. ★★ 1.35 **Nature's Weirdest Events** The town brought to a standstill by a swarm of flying insects. (R) 2.05 **The World's Most Extraordinary Homes** A house in Canada inspired by two ships in dry dock. (R)

ITV



Warwick Davis hosts the quiz show, Tenable, on at 3.00pm

6.00 **Good Morning Britain** Ventriloquist and America's Got Talent winner Paul Zerdin talks about his stint in panto. Plus, news and current affairs, plus health, entertainment and lifestyle features. 8.30 **Lorraine** Entertainment and fashion news. 9.25 **Best Walks with a View** with Julia Bradbury The presenter ventures towards Cumbria's High Cup Nick. (R) 9.50 FILM: **Everything or Nothing: The Untold Story of 007** (2012) Documentary about the making of the James Bond films. ★★ 11.45 **Bond Girls Are Forever** The thrill of being a Bond girl. (R) 12.45 **ITV Lunchtime News**; Weather. 12.55 **ITV News Central**; Weather. 1.00 **Midsomer Murders** A man is mauled to death by a wild boar. (R)

Ch4



Ashley Jensen, Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, on at 8.00pm

7.05 FILM: **Black Nativity** (2013) Musical, starring Jacob Latimore. ★★ 8.50 **Lego Masters** The teams compete in two challenges on the theme of nature. (R) 9.50 **The Simpsons** Bart develops a sense of civic pride. (R) 10.20 **The Simpsons** Springfield gets a new telephone code. (R) 10.50 **The Simpsons** Homer and Marge dispense marital advice. (R) 11.15 FILM: **Hotel for Dogs** (2009) An orphaned brother and sister in foster care transform an abandoned hotel into luxury accommodation for stray dogs. Family comedy, with Emma Roberts, Jake T Austin and Don Cheadle. ★★ 1.20 FILM: **Cutthroat Island** (1995) Swashbuckling adventure, with Geena Davis. ★★

Ch5



Action from the third heat, World's Strongest Man 2017, on at 8.00pm

6.00 **Milkshake!** 9.00 FILM: **Arthur 2: On the Rocks** (1988) The drunken millionaire is bankrupt, while his wife wants to have a baby and pushes him into taking responsibility for once. Comedy sequel, with Dudley Moore and Liza Minnelli. ★ 11.10 FILM: **Dirty Rotten Scoundrels** (1988) Two rival conmen on the French Riviera make a wager over who will be the first to trick a glamorous heiress out of her fortune. Comedy, starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin. ★★ 1.20 FILM: **Labyrinth** (1986) A teenager travels through a magical maze to rescue her baby brother from a band of goblins and their sinister king. Fantasy adventure, starring Jennifer Connelly and David Bowie. ★★

3.50 **Room on the Broom** (R) 4.20 **Brave** (2012) ★★ 5.45 **Pointless** (R) 6.30 **BBC News at Six**; Weather 6.45 **Midlands Today**; Weather 7.00 **Celebrity Mastermind** Actor John Bradley, hockey player Crista Cullen, Radio 1Xtra presenter Nick Bright and Hollyoaks actress Anna Passey compete in the specialist and general knowledge quiz. 7.30 **Tim Vine Travels Through Time Christmas Special** Tim journeys back in time to Tudor England in a quest to find a silver lion and bring Christmas to Henry VIII's court. Comedy, guest starring Emma Bunton and the Rev Richard Coles. 8.00 **EastEnders** Mick has to decide whether he is part of Aidan's gang, Carmel and Shakil put paid to Kush and Denise's hopes of a quiet night in, and the Vic regulars see the year out with a bang. 8.30 **Would I Lie to You?** Rob Brydon hosts the comedy panel show, with Steve Davis, Craig Parkinson, Sara Pascoe and Claudia Winkleman joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack. 9.00 **BBC News** 9.10 **Midlands Today**; Weather; National Lottery Update 9.15 **Gone Girl** (2014) Premiere. A man reports his wife's disappearance, only to end up under media scrutiny and accused of murder. David Fincher's crime thriller, with Ben Affleck. ★★ 11.40 **Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show** The comedy star concludes his entertainment showcase with a festive special. (R) 12.45 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 12.50 **BBC News**

3.05 **Inside the Factory** (R) 4.05 **Brave** (2012) ★★ 5.45 **Pointless** (R) 6.30 **BBC News at Six**; Weather 6.45 **Midlands Today**; Weather 7.00 **Celebrity Mastermind** Actor John Bradley, hockey player Crista Cullen, Radio 1Xtra presenter Nick Bright and Hollyoaks actress Anna Passey compete in the specialist and general knowledge quiz. 7.30 **Tim Vine Travels Through Time Christmas Special** Tim journeys back in time to Tudor England in a quest to find a silver lion and bring Christmas to Henry VIII's court. Comedy, guest starring Emma Bunton and the Rev Richard Coles. 8.00 **EastEnders** Mick has to decide whether he is part of Aidan's gang, Carmel and Shakil put paid to Kush and Denise's hopes of a quiet night in, and the Vic regulars see the year out with a bang. 8.30 **Would I Lie to You?** Rob Brydon hosts the comedy panel show, with Steve Davis, Craig Parkinson, Sara Pascoe and Claudia Winkleman joining team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack. 9.00 **BBC News** 9.10 **Midlands Today**; Weather; National Lottery Update 9.15 **Gone Girl** (2014) Premiere. A man reports his wife's disappearance, only to end up under media scrutiny and accused of murder. David Fincher's crime thriller, with Ben Affleck. ★★ 11.40 **Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show** The comedy star concludes his entertainment showcase with a festive special. (R) 12.45 **Weather for the Week Ahead** 12.50 **BBC News**

3.00 **Tenable** A team of five from Merseyside answers questions. Last in the series. (R) 4.00 **Tipping Point** Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard. (R) 5.00 **The Chase** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R) 6.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs** A puppy is rushed to the clinic when an injury comes to light just days after arriving at Battersea, while Paul pampers a Yorkshire terrier that has been given up by its owner. (R) 6.30 **ITV News Central**; Weather. 6.45 **ITV Evening News**; Weather. 7.00 **Emmerdale** The Dingles get ready, and Bernice makes arrangements. 7.30 **Coronation Street** Roy begs Carla not to return to Devon and to move in with him instead, and Adam offers to help Geraldine get Summer taken away from Todd and Billy. 8.00 **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** (2009) The wizard must uncover the secrets of Lord Voldemort's past to try to end the evil sorcerer's reign of terror. Fantasy adventure sequel, with Daniel Radcliffe and Michael Gambon. ★★ 10.50 **ITV News**; Weather. 11.09 **ITV Central Weather** 11.10 **Tina & Bobby** The former England star winds up managing a lowly non-league side, and Tina dismisses rumours he's having an affair - until her worst fears are confirmed. Last in the series. (R) 12.10 **Bear's Mission with Rob Brydon** (R) 1.05 **Jackpot247** Interactive gaming. 3.00 **100 Year Old Drivers** (R) 3.50 **ITV News** Text-based information service.

3.40 **Four Rooms with Sarah Beeny** Items include a Second World War Tommy Gun. 4.45 **Channel 4 News** 5.00 **The Simpsons** Lisa joins a group of eco-radicals. (R) 5.30 **The Simpsons** Mr Burns hires Homer to play pranks. (R) 6.00 **Hollyoaks** Tom celebrates his birthday at The Loft. 7.00 **Travel Man: 48 Hours in Hong Kong** Richard Ayoade is joined by actor Jon Hamm, star of Mad Men and Baby Driver, for a Yuletide trek around Hong Kong - the most visited and most vertical city on the planet. (R) 8.00 **Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast** Ashley Jensen, who learns to make authentic Umbrian pasta with truffle. Jimmy also helps the BNLI create the perfect fundraising feast. 9.00 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special** Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words and numbers quiz, with Jon Richardson and Catherine Tate teaming up against Sean Lock and Joe Wilkinson. 10.00 **Gogglebox** 2017 Highlights from the most recent series, featuring the armchair critics' reactions to The Crystal Maze, the Weakest Link Celebrity Special, and Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R) 12.05 FILM: **I Give It a Year** (2013) ★★ 1.55 FILM: **The River Wild** (1994) ★★ 3.50 **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (R) 4.35 **Four in a Bed** (R) 5.00 **Jamie's Cracking Christmas** (R) 5.15 FILM: **The Three Musketeers** (1973) ★★

3.20 **Look Who's Talking** (1989) Comedy, starring Kirstie Alley. ★★ 5.10 **Footloose** (1984) Drama, starring Kevin Bacon. ★★ 7.00 **Winter in Yorkshire** As winter takes its toll, cameras follow grey seal pups at Ravenscar beach, and the progress of many short-eared owls that land on the moors; (R) 5 News Update 8.00 **World's Strongest Man 2017** Action from the third heat in Botswana, which featured six tasks including the 15-tonne Bus Pull, the 350kg Dead Lift and the 200kg Elephant Carry; 5 News Update 9.00 **Victoria Wood by Her Friends** Profile of the writer and comedian, featuring clips of some of the funniest performances of her 40-year career and contributions from friends, fans and co-stars. 10.00 **Victoria Wood: Live 1997** The comedian performs stand-up and sketches, recorded during Victoria's 1997 tour and acclaimed as one of the very best stand-up shows of the decade. (R) 12.00 **SuperCasino** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.05 **Love/Hate** Nidge seizes his opportunity to take control of the gang and sets about getting his cohorts back to business and Mary discovers the extent of Luke's obsession. Last in the series. (R) 4.00 **Winter in Alaska** Documentary following four seasons in the north American state, beginning with winter, where snowfall is measured in feet rather than inches. (R) 4.45 **House Doctor** A bachelor pad in Knutsford, Cheshire. (R) 5.10 **House Busters** Life-enhancing changes to a home. (R) 5.35 **Wildlife SOS** The work of volunteers at an animal sanctuary. (R)

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That's Entertainment

Theatre has planned a Grand 2018



They got rhythm – Tom Chambers and Charlotte Wakefield in the George and Ira Gershwin musical *Crazy For You*



Dancing Queens and Super Troupers will be heading to Wolverhampton Grand for the big ABBA hits in *Mamma Mia!*



Natural Woman – Brontë Barbé plays singer-songwriter Carole King in the acclaimed show about her life, *Beautiful*



In two minds – gothic horror as Phil Daniels plays Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

PANTO season is in full swing but Wolverhampton Grand Theatre has already planned a bumper 2018 of top shows, including a new thriller, fresh adaptations of classics and the return of some old favourites.

Jack And The Beanstalk continues the family fun until January 14. Then the Grand gets the new year off to a dramatic start with the premiere of Ruth Rendell thriller *Gallowglass* (written as Barbara Vine) a story about a child's kidnapping and obsession. It's at the Wolverhampton theatre from January 18 to 20. The National Theatre's production of Henrick

Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, given a modern makeover by award-winning playwright Patrick Marber, visits January 23-27. The late 19th century masterpiece tells of the original desperate housewife, the conflicted Hedda, a woman caught in a loveless marriage. It is a powerful role for Lizzy Watts, who had a part in TV's *The Durrells* as Larry's girlfriend Nancy.

Spine-tingling ghost story *The Turn Of The Screw*, adapted from Henry James' novel by Tim Luscombe, is on from April 10 to 14, then another classic tale of terror stars Quadrophonia actor Phil Daniels as Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, May 1 to 5.

Grand musical highlights include blockbuster ABBA musical *Mamma Mia!* resident for three weeks, from February 6 to 24. Fans of can say *Good Morning Baltimore* again when *Hairspray* returns (February 26-March 3), and Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* makes a comeback April 16-21.

A top-notch cast, spectacular staging and great Gershwin tunes combine to make *Crazy For You*, with Tom 'Strictly' Chambers, Claire Sweeney and Charlotte Wakefield, one of the most eagerly-awaited shows of the year, on from May 8 to 12.

Joe Pasquale steps into the shoes of

Michael Crawford as the accident-prone Frank Spencer in a new stage version of *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*, based on the classic 70s TV sit-com.

June is musical month with *Beautiful* the acclaimed Carole King Musical, with Brontë Barbé as the US hitmaker, coming to the Grand (12-16) as part of its first UK tour after West End success.

Then Hayley Tamaddon (so good in the touring version of *Chicago*) stars in the 1920s-set flapper musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (26-30).

The *Jersey Boys* are working their way back

to Wolverhampton to bring the music of *The Four Seasons* from August 28 to September 8. The recent West End favourite *Kinky Boots* struts its stuff at the Grand from October 16 to 27.

And, by the way, if you are eager for further panto magic next year – the Grand has already announced that next festive season's panto is *Sleeping Beauty*, and tickets are available now.

For further details about these shows and many more, including one-nighters and amateur productions, see grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212.

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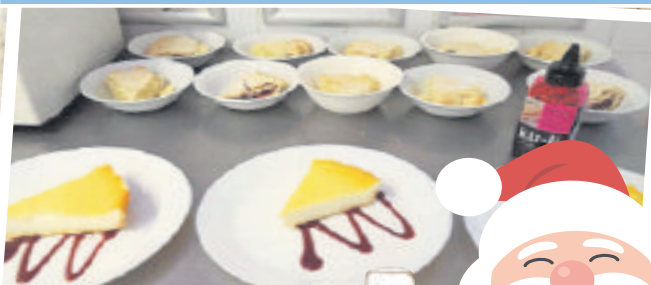
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Hyundai's first foray into hot hatch market makes its case

It is one of the best looking cars in the hot hatch segment

By Jack Evans

This is Hyundai's new hot-hatch – the i30 N. Aiming to tackle the likes of the Volkswagen Golf GTI and Honda Civic Type R, it's the South Korean manufacturer's first foray into the ever-growing sports hatchback segment.

There's a lot going on underneath the skin of the i30 N, but it all works together to make it as competitive as possible in what is a very fought over segment.

Under the bonnet sits a turbocharged 2.0-litre petrol engine producing 271bhp and 353Nm of torque. The regular i30 N, which does without the clever differential or added exhaust trickery, makes do with 'just' 247bhp. In this case, we've been driving the more powerful version, capable of hitting 60mph in 5.9 seconds before hitting a top speed of 155mph.

A key part of the i30 N's armament is its Drive Mode selector. This allows you to cycle through various drive settings, with each changing the car a surprising amount. More importantly, it allows you to set up the car to your individual tastes. Usefully for the UK, it allows you to slacken off the suspension yet keep the car's engine and exhaust in their sportiest modes – ideal for pothole-ridden British b-roads.



Up and running, the i30 N gets better and better

Sit behind the wheel of the i30 N and, in truth, you could believe that you were sat in pretty much any other Hyundai product. You get the sense that the money has been spent on making the car drive well and, thankfully, that's exactly what it does.

Press the engine starter button and you're met by a cackle from the exhaust – immediately a good sign. The major control weights are well-judged; pulling away from a stop requires little management of the relatively light clutch, while the gearbox – which uses the same housing as the i40 – is notchy and simple to operate. The fundamentals, therefore, are solid.

Up and running, the i30 N simply gets better and better. The steering is accurate and allows you to easily place the car, and this is matched by an engine that offers more than enough low-down grunt.

We'd argue that, with its variety of small exterior additions, the i30 N is one of the best looking cars in the hot hatch segment. Additional air vents and a large rear diffuser help the car stand out just enough without shouting too loudly about it.

As mentioned previously, the interior of the N isn't wildly different to that in the regular i30. There are just enough features to keep it feeling special, though. The plastics surrounding the window switches are scratchy – though we are being picky here.

Save for a few additional steering wheel buttons – most notably the drive mode selectors – it's as you'd expect from the regular i30 N. Key elements have been changed however; the metal gear stick is exclusive to the i30 N, as are the sports pedals.

The i30 N's price tag is worth remembering at this point – prices for the Performance model start at £27,995, so it's never going to feel completely premium.

Whereas other manufacturers offer customers a wealth of optional extras to choose from, Hyundai has decided to keep things simple. You're able to pick pearl paint for £585 – and that's it. Despite this, you still get a full infotainment system with eight-inch colour touchscreen as standard, as well as Apple Car Play and Android Auto. There's also a five-year unlimited mileage warranty – and this covers track use, too.

With only a relatively young motorsport program and no production performance car heritage to speak of, you could have forgiven Hyundai for producing somewhat of a damp squib for its first hot hatch. However, this really couldn't be further from the truth – the i30 N is a hugely capable car available for an impressively competitive price. In short, we'd think long and hard about going for a Golf GTI – the i30 N is the complete package, and one of the best hatches on sale today.

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3

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puppy whilst it is still with it's
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2. Do not arrange to collect a
puppy from any other location
than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any
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great care to avoid publication
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liability should readers
purchase from this kind of
establishment.

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have the required Passport infor-
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Guns & Dogs

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requirements for owning and using
guns.

5
Business &
Farming

Business Opportunities

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advice before entering into any
obligations.

6
Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
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independent legal advice before
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NOTICE TO READERS
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07754 263732/01562 243346



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P4 REG

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9

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Public Notices

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ALISON, 38, attractive slim, mature student, passionate about history, seeks older male for good conversation, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429667** ☺

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ Text Only. Box: **4177148** ☺

HEATHER, single, very attractive brunette, 34, sensual and interesting, looking to add to life's experiences and adventures with professional male. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429647** ☺

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: **4126579** ☺

JAN 47, once bitten twice shy! Just looking for non complicated fun times. Attractive, discreet, OHAC, you won't be disappointed. Any age/looks/status. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429453** ☺

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your couger and dress me up in my uniform. Text Only. Box: **4166063** ☺

SARAH 35, recently divorced, slim 5ft 7ins, pretty, seeks male up to 50yrs for meals out hopefully leading to more. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429385** ☺

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, not complicated times. Must have great soh, looks unimportant. Text Only. Box: **4037147** ☺

DEBBIE 38, fit size 12, discreet, WLTm intelligent man for fun relationship with no ties. Any age. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429417** ☺

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just chat to prolong the interest in our ways. Text Only. Box **4063856** ☺

FEMALE, divorced, 58yrs old, looking for a nice man, non-smoker, clean-shaven, I enjoy walking, meals in/out, musical shows and much more. Text only replies. Mailbox: **5662627** ☺

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: **4151593** ☺

FEMALE 46, honest, genuine and caring. Looking for LTR with a male. Text only replies. Box no: **4209465** ☺

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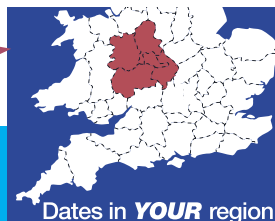
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MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, open-minded and doesn't suffer fools, looking for relationship with nice guy for discreet relationship. Status unimportant. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429287** ☺

ANNA, 53yrs, attractive blonde lady, with lovely curves. Seeking man any age for no strings discreet fun. Tel: **0906 515 3043** Box: **429721** ☺

PAMELA, mature presentable lady, well educated, solvent, very young at heart. Hoping to meet presentable gent. Call me. Or text if you prefer. I promise to get back to you. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429329** ☺

AMANDA, 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad-minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: **0906 515 3035** Box: **429287** ☺

LINDA, late 50s lady, promises to call you back if you text or call. She's attractive and waiting to meet you. You must be 40+ with GSOH. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429325** ☺

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busty with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. Tel: **0906 515 3015** Box: **427633** ☺

ATTRACTION widowed lady, 70yrs but looks much much younger. GSOH, fun loving. WLTm man 67+ for loving tender relationship. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429327** ☺

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. Tel: **0906 515 3039** Box: **426853** ☺

JACKIE 40, slim easygoing blonde, works too hard, needs sincere male to help live up her free time. Looks/status unimportant. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429381** ☺

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: **0906 515 3003** Box: **419673** ☺

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: **0906 515 3019** Box: **413399** ☺

JAN 47, once bitten twice shy! Just looking for non complicated fun times. Attractive, discreet, OHAC, you won't be disappointed. Any age/looks/status. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429453** ☺

HARRIET 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: **0906 515 3031** Box **426205** ☺

FEMALE 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out/in, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: **5877942** ☺

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: **0906 515 3035** Box **425979** ☺

TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429167** ☺

ELIZABETH, 45, fed up with lonely nights! Blonde blue eyed, no children/ties. WLTm someone for cosy nights in and TLC. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429221** ☺

ATTRACTION lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429038** ☺

JANE, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTm gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429165** ☺

ATTRACTION widow, 70s, solvent, fit and still attractive GSOH, hoping to meet a nice gent for days out, possibly more. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429159** ☺

LINDA, 61, attractive, looking for a good man who is loving, tactile and sensitive. Can you put the spring back in my step? Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429085** ☺

JANE, 49, attractive young looking female, fit and sporty, has much to offer someone special, would love to be part of a couple again. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429067** ☺

JANE, 47, confident full figured and all woman, likes cosy nights in with that special person, looking for friendship maybe more. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **428905** ☺

CAROLE Ann, 56, sensitive, slim, fun loving brunette, loves to cook for her man, seeks tall, handsome male for a tactile relationship. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **428891** ☺

Single Men

MALE, mid 50s, N/S, semi retired, slim build, likes walking, holidays, occasional drinks, films, good chats, enjoys life, looking to meet a female, N/S, 50 plus, for friendship and going out. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429637** ☺

COLIN, 50, seeks kind, caring, loving cuddly large lady 40-60 for LTR and love. Likes cuddles and kisses. Text only replies. Mailbox: **6091168** ☺

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MALE bi guy, 40, seeking similar aged guy with daytime accommodation, for mutual fun. Glos area. Text only replies. Mailbox: **4171960** ☺

BI male, 50s, can be submissive seeks older male for discreet meets. Text only replies. Mailbox: **5560402** ☺

BI, retired, WLTm similar guys in West Midlands, 65-80, for friendship and fun. Text only replies. Mailbox: **6022718** ☺

MALE, tall, slim, 60ish, would love to meet males for fun times in the West Midlands. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **429563** ☺

BI male, living in the Wolverhampton area, seeking bi or gay or cross dresser who can accommodate, for fun. Tel No: **0906 500 3955** Box No: **427531** ☺

NAUGHTY boy 57, seeks strict dominant gent to whip him into shape. Text only replies. Mailbox: **5378503** ☺

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Front, from left, Colin Thompson, Peter Holmes and Alan Ryder with fellow winners



Veteran of the Year went to Anna Edwards, aged 67



Kully Dulay, Angela Slater, Natalie Gilliland and Jane Langford from Ladybirds



Volunteer of the Year, 11-year-old Neve Egan



The Special Award of the Year presented to Councillor Mak Singh



Councillor Evans and Volunteer of the Year Jacky Silvester from Tettenhall



The Disabled Athlete of the Year, Richard Hammond from Tettenhall



Councillor Steve Evans presents Coach of the Year to Steve Peat

Sporting heroes step into the spotlight for awards

WOLVERHAMPTON'S sporting heroes took centre stage at the city's Sports Advisory Council awards night.

The annual event gives recognition to clubs, sportsmen and women as well as the unsung heroes who put in hours of service behind the scenes.

The Sports Advisory Council celebrated its 50th birthday earlier this year and chairman Peter Holmes MBE, who has overseen every awards ceremony since its formation, was delighted to celebrate sport and to acknowledge the unselfish work of countless volunteers.

"It was a pleasant evening and it was lovely to see a group of people who don't normally get acknowledged step into the spotlight," he said.

"I still get a tingle when I see what these wonderful people have contributed to their sport. In many cases it has been anonymous.

"A lot of these people have been ignored in the past, I hope we are highlighting what they do. I hope people appreciate what we try to do and it is purely and simply about the anonymous workers getting their true recognition.

"What never ceases to amaze me is the fact that we are a sporting city. Sport is in the DNA of every true Wulfrunian, whether they are a performer, a supporter or an official – somewhere in their DNA sport is in there.

Realise

"We have 18 centenary clubs in the city and in five years time we will have four more. I wish the council would realise this is in selling Wolverhampton. When people come into Wolverhampton, one of the first things they get into is sport.

"It's the opportunity for them to integrate into life in Wolverhampton. It's so simple, and yet we tend to ignore it. There are no barriers in sport, the only barrier is whether you can afford to take part."

Councillor Steve Evans handed out the 11 awards at Fordhouses Cricket Club. Wolverhampton City of Netball League stalwart Lorraine Shail took the Award of Merit for her years of service as a player, coach and umpire.

The Disabled Athlete of the Year went to Richard Hammond, celebrating his 20th year as a member of Wolverhampton Special Olympics. He has trained with

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"We are a sporting city. Sport is in the DNA of every true Wulfrunian. Somewhere in their DNA sport is in there."

the swimming and gymnastic sections since the age of nine. He won two silver medals in the UK Special Olympic Games held in Sheffield in August to add to the two he won representing Great Britain at World Special Olympic Games in Athens in 2011.

The Coach of the Year accolade was picked up by Steve Peat. Peat was nominated by Wolverhampton Special Olympics after taking on a table tennis coaching role with the group.

He quickly made his mark with Wolverhampton the only group from the West Midlands to claim a gold at the Games in Sheffield earlier this year.

There was further cause for celebration for Wolverhampton Special Olympics after Jacky Silvester was named Volunteer of the Year.

Silvester has been coaching gymnastics and athletics for 32 years and is also head coach of the West Midlands Special Olympics, chair of the Wolverhampton Special Olympics and has coached at seven national summer games.

Wolverhampton City Netball netted another two prizes with Neve Egan scooping the Young Volunteer of the Year award and Anna Edwards the Veteran of the Year. As well as playing for Blaze, 11-year-old Egan is always on hand to help out with coaching and various other duties for her club and within the league.

Edwards stills plays at the age of 67 for Zimmers and has clocked up more than 50 years on court since she started playing netball at Manor Secondary School. She has also turned out for Park Rebels and Sam and is a well-known and popular figure with clubmates and opposition players alike.

Wolverhampton & Bilston Athletics Club were also

honoured for reaching their half-century. The club was formed in 1967 when Wolverhampton Harriers and Bilston Athletic Harriers joined forces.

Over the years they have produced some outstanding athletes who have represented the club and their country on the world stage.

Javelin thrower Tessa Sanderson won Olympic gold at Los Angeles in 1984 while Gary and Kath Cook won silver and bronze in their respective 4x400m relay events.

The club has also been granted the Queen's Award for outstanding work in the community and continues to go from strength to strength.

Ladybirds Netball Club were named Team/Club of the Year. They joined the Wolverhampton City Netball League in 1986 under the name of Wood Green High School.

After a few years of action they changed their name to Market Tavern after obtaining a sponsorship deal and have been playing under the Ladybirds guise since 1994.

Their on-court successes include winning the league's Handicap Tournament, Open Knockout and Non-Knockout Cup.

Councillor Mak Singh walked away with the Special Award of the Year. Singh has given outstanding support to the Sports Advisory Council and was a key figure in organising the 50 year celebrations in the summer.

Bollywood

Singh has an impressive sporting background having won numerous powerlifting titles and also spent several years as a stunt double in Bollywood films.

The final two awards were the RV Cook Memorial Trophy and HE Lane Memorial Trophy. The latter went to Alan Ryder, a member of the JW Hunt Cup committee, for services to local football, that has seen him involved at grassroots level as a player and secretary with clubs including Northcote Old Boys, Red Dragons, Wolverhampton Transport, Wednesfield Town and Marston's for more than 45 years.

The RV Cook Trophy went to Wolverhampton & Bilston AC's Colin Thompson. He joined the club in 1999 as a runner and moved onto the committee a year later, becoming chairman in 2004.

He instigated numerous initiatives that have helped the club grow. One of the highlights was when W&B were voted England Athletics Development Club of the Year in 2010.



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The only way is Essex after Dodd winner

MATT Dodd fired Stourbridge into the last 32 of the FA Trophy on his 100th appearance for the club.

The Glassboys travel to Essex to face Billericay Town, of the Isthmian League Premier, in the second round on January 13.

On Saturday, Dodd downed former club Leamington by scrambling in off the post and via keeper Tony Breeden's glove after Kyle Perry had nodded an Aaron Forde corner towards goal three minutes after half-time.

Breeden denied Forde a second from Luke Shearer's centre just before the hour-mark, blocking with his legs, but the Brakes offered little hope of a leveller. It meant Leamington became Stour's third National North scalp in cup competitions this season, but boss Gary Hackett stressed the importance of repeat performances in the league.

"I was delighted to see Matt nick a goal after missing him for two or three weeks," said Hackett. "I hadn't been aware of it being his 100th game and it was a great way to mark the occasion."

"Leamington were every bit as tough as we expected them to be and made it scrappy but we deserved the win."

"We were very disciplined and kept a clean sheet. Everyone deserves a lot of credit because it was a strong all-round performance. Now we need to get back to addressing our league form."

Stourbridge scooped £6,000 in prize money for winning and have moved within four stages of a Wembley final.

Kaiman Anderson, who has previously enjoyed a loan spell at Yeltz, has joined Glassboys on a two-month loan deal from Southport.

Heathens to race on in National Trophy

CRADLEY Heathens will race for the National Trophy next year.

The nomadic club have entered the competition for the first time to ensure the world famous name survives into a ninth season since their relaunch. All home meetings will be raced at Monmore Green after making the decision not to take Birmingham up on the offer to race at Perry Barr. They will face Birmingham, Buxton, Coventry and Stoke at home and away.

Manager Will Pottinger has already pledged his commitment to stay in charge of the team and will be looking to use a settled squad of riders.

But it means Heathens won't be in the National League.

Co-promoter Gary Patchett said: "When we brought the Heathens back to the track in 2010 the longevity of the club was dependent on our success or failure to find a site suitable to develop into a permanent base."

"We made a pledge to our supporters to do everything in our power to keep the club on track next season and this was the only option open to us."

Rugby club is tackling knife crime



Farah Ahmed, Opening Boundaries, Robin Edwards, SRFC chairman, Peter Wheeler, RFU junior vice-president, Nick Perry, SRFC president

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club has joined a campaign to raise awareness of knife crime and how it can be tackled.

The club is working in partnership with Opening Boundaries to organise a community charity event next May.

They are teaming up with West Midlands Police who have given their backing to the 'I support Tackling Knife Crime' campaign which was launched in November to coincide with the club's first game on its new artificial grass pitch.

The tournament aims to be fully inclusive and

will raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital. Miranda Williams, public fundraising manager at Birmingham Children's Hospital charity, said: "We are incredibly grateful to Opening Boundaries and Stourbridge Rugby Club. The money will make a huge difference to the lives of our brave children and their families."

Register via info@openingboundaries.org before January 31.

On the pitch, Stourbridge ended 2017 with a 39-25 win over Macclesfield last weekend.

STOKES COMES OUT FIGHTING

WEST Bromwich's Tom Stokes wants to come flying out of the blocks when he returns to action in an eight-rounder tonight (Thursday).

Stokes is determined to bounce back when takes on former Southern area titlist Nicky Jenman in Birmingham.

The two top the bill at the Holiday Inn Queen-sway in Birmingham, on a show staged by Errol Johnson's BCB Promotions titled 'The Fight Before Christmas', sponsored by Grosvenor Casino Birmingham Hill Street.

Both are determined to get back into the title chase, Stokes after coming up short to Tyler Denny on points for the Midlands middleweight title in September. Southpaw Jenman, 31, from Brighton, lost his area strap to Grant Dennis last December but has won two bouts since.

Stokes, who turned 23 this month, had racked up nine wins from nine before facing Denny.

Turf

"I've trained hard for this fight," Stokes said. "I want a solid performance and a good win to finish this year on a high."

Kane Baker also features. He could come flying down the weights in 2018 after signing off for this year on his own turf.

The born and bred Brummie features after being unable to fight at Walsall FC last weekend as clearance was not obtained from the British Boxing Board of Control in time.

Baker received the standard month-long ban for suffering a cut against Gary Cully, who he took the distance on November 18.

The 27-year-old could travel down to super feather but must first deal with Chris Adaway, who was a well-schooled amateur with the Mayflower Club in Plymouth before turning pro.

Jordan Clayton tackles Danny Little in the other bout. Tickets are £65, including two-course meal. Contact the boxers on Facebook or online at iboxingtickets.com

Event a great try from students



Halesowen College students who organised the tag rugby event

HALESOWEN College students organised and held a tag rugby competition in partnership with five local primary schools.

Schools involved were St Kenelm's Primary, in Romsley, Clent Primary, Belbroughton Primary, Blakedown Primary and Hagley Primary School. There were two competitions, one for Year Threes and one for Year Fours.

The OCR Level Three Sports students planned the competition as part of their 'organising events' unit. They had help from A-Level student Geoff Palmer to support with refereeing. The Year Three contest was won by Blake-down and the Year Four competition was won by Belbroughton.

Sports lecturer Katy Skinner said: "It was great to see all the students pull together."

Students involved were Mollie Bryant-Jones, Ben Gordon, Katie Griffiths, Dominique Hmaissi, William Howells, Mathew Jenkinson, Mark Laing, Connor Phillips, Emily Reynolds, Trae Samuels, Fortune Sion, Cameron Tyrell, Jack Waldron, Bradley Webb and Alex Westwood.

Pair facing midweek darts action

TIPTON duo Scott Baker and Jamie Hughes will sit out the opening weekend of the 2018 BDO World Championship after being assigned midweek slots for their ties.

The Black Country throwers can't toe the oche together until, at least, the semi-finals at Lakeside.

Baker makes his worlds debut and takes on Belgium's Andy Beatus, the current Belgium Masters and England Masters champion, in a first-to-three sets tie.

The match will open the evening session on Monday, January 8 and will be broadcast on BT Sport.

The winner will take on either former BDO winner Scott Mitchell or Lithuania's Darius Labanauskas in the best-of-five second round clash.

Third seed Hughes, a two-time worlds semi-finalist, enters the fray for the evening's line-up the following day in the last game of the day's schedule.

He will play either Canada's David Cameron or German open qualifier Michael Unterbuchner, who will slug it out, in front of Channel 4 viewers, in the first clash on Tuesday afternoon.

Should he prevail, Hughes will likely go up against Martin Phillips, who must first beat either New Zealand's Craig Caldwell or English debutant Daniel Day.

Down the line, 'Yozza' could face a potential last four rematch with reigning world champion Glen Durrant, who beat him at the same stage last time.

Stars toe the oche in hospice fundraiser

FOUR international players will toe the oche at a charity darts event in Dudley.

Daryl Gurney, Steve Beaton, Jamie Caven and Alan Norris will lock horns in the second annual Tungsten Hold 'Em event at Parkes Hall Social Club on February 24. Dutchman Jelle Klaasen won last year, with more than £4,000 raised for the Mary Stevens Hospice.

A limited number of standing tickets are still left. Crowd members can win the chance to play against some of the stars in a fundraising raffle. Standard standing tickets are £20, with VIP seated tickets at £30 per person. Call 07950 213169 or 07727 679384.

*** The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketterly, Telford. Thursday, December 21, 2017



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